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THE TRUE BASIS

OF

RELIGIOUS UNITY.

BY

REV. CHARLES W. WENDTE.

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Our Faith.

The Fatherhood of God.
The Brotherhood of Man.
The Leadership of Jesus.
Salvation by Character.
The Progress of Mankind,
onward and upward forever.

Typical Covenant of a Unitarian Church.

In the love of the truth, and the spirit of Jesus Christ, we unite for the worship of God and the service of man.

Our Declaration

(*As expressed in the By-Laws of the American Unitarian Association.*)

"The object of the American Unitarian Association shall be to diffuse the knowledge and promote the interests of pure Christianity; and all Unitarian Christians shall be invited to unite and co-operate with it for that purpose."

(*As expressed by the National Conference of Unitarian and Other Christian Churches, at Saratoga, N. Y., in 1894.*)

"These Churches accept the religion of Jesus, holding, in accordance with his teaching, that practical religion is summed up in love to God and love to man.

"The Conference recognizes the fact that its constituency is Congregational in tradition and polity. Therefore, it declares that nothing in this Constitution is to be construed as an authoritative test; and we cordially invite to our working fellowship any who, while differing from us in belief, are in general sympathy with our spirit and our practical aims."

THE TRUE BASIS OF RELIGIOUS UNITY.

I. To unite all the followers of Jesus into one universal Church has been the ideal aim of the Christian world in all ages. The Roman Catholic Church places this idea at the forefront of its pretensions, as is indicated by the term "Catholic," which means the one, universal, Church. Throughout the Christian ages the Church of Rome has persistently advanced this claim to unity and universality, notwithstanding the facts of history abundantly disprove it.

The encyclical of Pope Leo XIII., in reply to Mr. Gladstone's plea for the recognition of the validity of the Anglican orders, argues in behalf of church unity as follows: "It is necessary that this Church should be one in all lands and at all times, . . . one in faith, one in end, one in the participation of the means adapted to the attainment of the end, and one as subject to one and the same authority. . . . It is the duty of all followers of Christ not merely to accept his doctrine generally, but to 'assent with their entire mind to all and every point of it.'"

"The fathers of the Church are unanimous in considering as outside the Catholic communion any one who in the least degree deviates from even one point of the doctrine proposed by the authoritative magisterium of the Church." (See Cardinal Gibbons's "Summary.")

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The Church of Rome, the encyclical maintains, is this one, united, universal, authoritative, exclusive, divinely commissioned Church of God on earth. But is this claim of Pope Leo a true and just one? Is there now, or was there ever, a time when the Roman Catholic doctrine and administration were accepted by all Christians everywhere or assented to unqualifiedly by all her adherents? An examination into the facts of history shows that this vaunted unity of Christendom never actually existed; that it was never more than a splendid dream, a sublime Utopia, which never was realized, and never will be realized on any of the lines which have thus far been laid down for it.

If there was ever a generation of Christians in which we should expect to find this uniformity of belief and practice, it was among the first and immediate disciples of Jesus. Yet the most casual reading of the New Testament shows us what differences of opinion there were among them concerning the personality of Jesus and the nature of his mission on earth. Some thought him an ancient prophet restored to life again. Others held him to be simply a man who through his righteousness and holiness had been exalted by the heavenly Father, after his death, to sit at His right hand, and share in His glory. Others, again, conceived him to have been a pre-existent, heavenly Being whom God had sent down to earth to dwell in a fleshly tabernacle and execute his divine mission, and then to return again to the Father and resume his exalted and heavenly rank which he had before the beginning of the world.

How differently, too, they thought on the subject of the Christian life! Things which seemed allowable to some were an offence and horror to others. Paul's Epistles are largely occupied with attempts to settle these differences. The infant Church was divided into

two opposite and hostile parties, — the party of Peter, whose centre was in Jerusalem, and which desired to confine the gospel as much as possible to the Jews, and the followers of Paul, who proclaimed the glad tidings to the Gentile world, and sought to establish a Christianity independent of the law of Moses. The contest was waged with great ardor and often with bitterness. It is evident that there was no such unity of sentiment and practice in the early Church as is usually claimed for it.

The apostolic Church consisted of a number of independent congregations, with a simple and democratic form of government, copied, in the main, from that of the synagogue. These churches were hospitable and helpful to one another, while disagreeing on many points of faith and practice. They held the apostles in especial honor, but maintained their congregational independence. In the churches founded by the apostle Paul, among the Gentile Christians, there was soon developed a very active intellectual life, which gave rise to great differences of opinion.

In Corinth, for instance, there were in the time of the apostles not only followers of Peter and Paul, but of Apollos and Cephas and others, who also claimed to build on the word of Christ. There were in the same congregation members who denied the resurrection and the life to come, others who held marriage and the use of animal food to be sinful acts. In the Church at Colosse speculations arose concerning the angelic world and the nature of Christ's glory with the Father. Everywhere in the Church innumerable heretical sects made their appearance. They were called Gnostics by the more orthodox believers. We should term them to-day rationalists, or radicals. These maintained widely differing doctrines, some profound and others puerile, just as it is among radical thinkers to-day. Celsus,

the first pagan critic of Christianity, writing about 178 A. D., says of the many dissensions among the Christians of his day: "At first, their number was small, and they were all of one mind [?]; but now that they are so numerous they are cut up into factions. They agree in one thing only; that is, the name, if, indeed, they agree in that."

The next generation of Christians inherited and continued these divisions and strifes, and gave them a literary expression. The writings of Philo, of Justin Martyr, of Irenæus, Tertullian, Origen, and others of the early Fathers, contain widely divergent opinions on the subject of Christian doctrine. But, with the gradual introduction of the gospel of Christ into the Roman Empire, there arose the dream of a great universal Christian Church, which was to convert and possess the earth. This splendid vision dazzled out of sight for the time all disagreements and rivalries. For mutual help and to aid in the spread of the new faith a closer union of the apostolic churches took place. Toward the close of the third century there seems to have been also some agreement on the points of belief essential to Christian discipleship, of which an echo has come down to us in the so-called "Apostles' Creed," which, as Professor Harnack and others have amply shown, is not itself of apostolic origin.

We know the story of the triumph of the Christian over the pagan faith. The Roman emperors made it their State religion. At the first General Church Council at Nicæa, in the year 325, the articles of Christian faith were sharply defined in what is known as the Nicene Creed; and the latter was enforced by the imperial power as the only and orthodox belief. Here, at length, the unity of Christendom seemed to be attained. The holy Roman Catholic Church — universal, alone

saving, and all-sufficient — began its eventful career on earth.

But its authority did not remain undisputed. The very distinctness with which the Council of Nicæa had defined the true doctrine led to a great dissension in the Church, which convulsed the empire for long years, and whose central topic was the Deity of Christ. The Arian controversy was of this nature. Arius and his followers affirmed the divinity of Christ, but denied his equality with God. The orthodox party under Athanasius maintained that he was God from all eternity and equal with the Father. This controversy was waged furiously, divided the Christian world, and for a long time was undecided. Now the Arians were victors in Church and State, and anon the Nicæan party triumphed. Christendom was divided into two hostile camps. There were in reality in that day two rival churches, each denouncing the other, and both invoking the arm of the worldly power to suppress their opponents.

No sooner was this controversy disposed of by the final triumph of the orthodox party than new dissensions arose, which lasted for centuries and convulsed the Christian world. The relation between the divine and the human nature in Jesus was now the chief topic of controversy. The different parties in the Church combated each other, not only with the weapons of the Spirit, but with banishments, executions, and fanatical wars. So violent and brutal did these controversies often become that, whereas in the first century of our era a contemporary was moved to exclaim, "See how these Christians love one another!" in the fourth century another witness could say with equal truthfulness, "There are no wild beasts so ferocious as Christians who differ concerning their faith." Yet this was the

period in which the Roman congregation gradually rose to supreme control, and the papacy was developed.

So it remained more or less throughout the Middle Ages. In the eleventh century these differences were accentuated and led to the permanent estrangement and division of Christendom into the Greek and Roman Churches. Each party hurled its anathemas at the other in parting, and each declared itself to be the true and only representative of Christ on earth. Henceforth there were in reality two Catholic churches, one at Rome and the other at Constantinople.

The Roman wing of the original Church was now, as it seemed, left undisturbed to carry out its doctrine of church unity. But not for long. The war of ideas, the clash of rival parties, went on as before. At one time the papacy itself was divided. There were rival popes at Rome and Avignon, each declaring the other to be schismatic and an emissary of Satan.

Meanwhile the monastic orders, and the scholastic theologians were engaged in just as violent controversies with one another as any sects of our own day. Not only in the ponderous treatises of the Schoolmen, but by the sword, the fagot, the rack and edict of excommunication did these disputants seek to controvert one another. Countless sects of heretics and reformers arose in the Church. Such were the Cathari, the Lollards, Albigenses, Vaudois, and Waldenses, the followers of Arnold of Brescia, Huss, Wickliffe, and Savonarola.

The intense religious agitation of those ages culminated at last in the Protestant Reformation under Luther, Zwingli, Calvin, and others. By it the Roman Church again lost a large portion of her following, and forfeited the spiritual control of the most powerful, enlightened, and dominant nations of the modern world.

With the withdrawal of so large and earnest an ele-

ment the Church of Rome might have hoped to enjoy a season of repose in which to cultivate the sentiment of unity and obedience among her adherents. But again divisions arose within her borders. The example of the Protestants, and the influence of modern civilization through its science, literature, laws, government, and society, have for the past three hundred years been steadily at work disintegrating and sapping her power over the remaining Catholic nations of the world. We behold to-day the chief supporters of her temporal and spiritual sway disaffected, restless, and alienated. Italy, France, Austria, Spain, Portugal, and Belgium are great battle-fields on which the papal power wages a continual conflict with its own spiritual subjects, and constantly loses ground. The temporal power is lost forever. The control of the schools is largely gone. The step now imminent in France is the abrogation of the concordat, or compact, with Rome, and the consequent withdrawal of State support from the clergy. Brazil, Mexico, and the South American republics are following in the same direction.

Day by day the control of Rome over the minds and hearts of these nations is lessening. The people, of all ranks and classes, are becoming sceptical of her divine right, indifferent to her appeals, contemptuous of her authority. Nowhere in the modern world is unbelief so widespread and profound as among Catholic nations. The way is preparing for a great transformation of the Roman Church and doctrine, or else another separation from it of many of her most intelligent members. Even among the priesthood this is apparent. Ever since the Reformation of Luther the Catholic clergy has been divided into two great parties, — the liberal Catholics and the Ultramontane. The former has sought to reform and remodel the Church according to the altered

needs of modern society. It has opposed the adoption of extreme doctrines and measures, and endeavored to curb the undue power of the papacy. The Ultramontane party, on the other hand, has, under Jesuit leadership, strenuously denied that the Church needed reforming or improving. It has opposed all attempts to reconcile the old doctrines with the new times, and has especially magnified the prestige and power of the papacy.

These two parties have striven with each other for the mastery, with varying success. Thus, under Pope Clement XIV., in 1773, the liberals secured the abrogation of the Order of Jesuits. "So long as the Order of Jesus exists," declared the papal bull, "it is quite impossible that the Church shall ever arrive at a true and lasting peace." In 1814 the Ultramontanes again rose to power; and Pius VII., "at the unanimous request of the Christian world," restored the Jesuits. The ambitious designs of the Society of Jesus led in 1870 to the promulgation of the dogma of papal infallibility by the Vatican Council. The opposition to this dogma on the part of many liberal and prominent members of the priesthood was pronounced and bitter.

This opposition, as it was uttered in private circles, from the pulpit, and in the session of the solemn conclave itself, has lately been published to the world. It there appears that the liberal bishops denounced the dogma of papal infallibility as irrational and impious. The pope they ridiculed as a narrow-minded old man, completely controlled by the Jesuits. The Ultramontanes returned this opposition with equal scorn, denouncing the liberals as rebels and traitors. The promulgation of the dogma, however, compelled the obedient assent or separation of those who had opposed it. Under the whip and spur of the church power the

most humiliating retractions were made by most of the dissenting bishops. But others, like the eminent Doellinger, the most learned of Catholic Church historians, refused to uphold what they had denounced as unhistorical and untrue.

Doellinger's famous book against papal usurpations, entitled "The Pope and the Council," by Janus, created an immense sensation in Catholic circles. As it had appeared anonymously, the Ultramontane party pretended that it was not the production of the eminent scholar. All doubts as to its authorship were set at rest, however, when a new edition appeared, which bore the name of Doellinger as its sole author, and in its preface gave an account of the circumstances under which it had been prepared. This later edition is entitled "Das Papstthum" ("The Papacy"), and is furnished with full citations and references to substantiate its assertions and arguments.

Under the leadership of Doellinger, Huber, Reinkens, and other ecclesiastics, another separation from Rome took place, known as the Old Catholic movement, which, although not large in numbers, is of importance as showing the drift of things in Catholic circles.

Here in America there does, indeed, exist greater uniformity of belief among Roman Catholics; and dissent is comparatively rare. The reason for this is obvious. The great bulk of Roman Catholics among us belong to the less educated class of foreign immigrants, who are accustomed to obedience, and who do not think for themselves in religious matters. With increased education and the gradual influence of our republican institutions in promoting personal independence, we must believe that American Catholics will yet prove as difficult to keep in the old ways as their French, Italian, or German brethren. The incidents of Drs.

McGlynn and Ducey, the Polish Secession, and similar rebellions on the part of clergy, illustrate this.

This review of Christian history shows that the claim of the Roman or any other sect to be the exclusive and universal Church of Christ is unfounded in fact or reason. There has always been the greatest diversity of opinion and practice among Christians, and this diversity increases rather than lessens with the growth of human culture. It was, therefore, a very proper saying of the learned Catholic scholar, Æneas Sylvius, afterward a pope, who tells us, "The Catholic Church is called the universal Church, not because all men have it, but because all men ought to have it," — a very wise distinction.

Let me not be misunderstood as not appreciating the many excellences and virtues of the Roman Catholic Church and clergy. There is much profoundly to admire in the piety of her followers and the consecration of her ministers. I am simply reading her history by the light of modern researches, which utterly disprove the claim of her exceptional and divine right, and place her on a par with the other sects and churches of Christendom.

II. Has Protestantism ever attained the ideal of Christian unity? Most assuredly not. The development of Protestant Christianity has been attended with intensified differences. Protestant history is sadly disfigured with divisions and strifes, hatreds and persecutions. Luther declared that his fellow-reformer, Carlstadt, was "riding to hell;" and he rejoiced at the news of Zwingli's death. The Calvinists denounced the Lutherans as no better than papists, and the Lutherans held the Calvinists to be worse than the infidel Turks. The Established Church of England pursued the followers of John Knox with fire and sword; and

Knox not only hurled in return fiery anathemas at Episcopacy, but, himself a fugitive, clamored for the expulsion of the Roman Catholics from England.

Since their day the increase of true religion, and the growth of enlightened opinion and a secular state, have greatly modified, if not altogether abolished, such intolerant displays. The Protestant world is, however, still divided into innumerable sects and parties, all more or less in conflict with each other, and often carrying the principle of individualism to an absurd extreme.

But there is this fundamental distinction between the Catholic and the Protestant idea of Christian unity: the former seeks to obtain it by establishing here on earth a great external, visible Church, whose creed and ritual shall be the same for all, and be accepted by all. The Protestant principle, on the other hand, seeks to found the invisible and spiritual Church of Christ on earth, — a Church which shall preserve unity of spirit amid great diversity of operations.

From the Protestant point of view, therefore, the existing division into denominations, the great variety of rites and forms, symbols and ceremonies, and modes of church government, are not only allowable, but a real help to the intellectual and religious life, so long as they do not violate the essential spirit of Christianity, — the spirit of truth, love, and charity. As James Freeman Clarke well said, "The strength of Protestantism lies in its sects, its weakness, in its sectarianism." And in a similar vein Dr. Channing tells us: "The dissensions of Protestantism go far to constitute its strength. By them the spirit of liberty, the only spirit Rome cannot conquer, is kept alive." It is because the Protestant churches have so often violated the great central principle of true Christianity that they

have failed to realize their idea of unity among Christians. They have sought to identify their special creed, or form, or fellowship with the Church universal, instead of ignoring denominational differences, and seeking for a religion of the spirit and a fellowship based on character, faith, and service.

A few years since I attended a church congress in one of our Eastern cities whose special purpose was to discuss the true way of arriving at religious and church unity. It was an admirable and representative gathering. There were present leading Baptists, Methodists, Presbyterians, Congregationalists, Swedenborgians, Episcopalians, Unitárians, and others. Each in turn gave his solution of the question. The Presbyterian thought the Westminster Confession offered the true basis of union. The New Churchman found it in the revelations of Swedenborg. The Episcopalian thought his Prayer Book the broadest foundation that could be offered. Thus each, although in the most beautiful spirit, identified his particular church or creed with the Church universal. As I came away, it was with the feeling that these excellent men were as yet far from that simple bond of union which Jesus declared over and over again to be all-sufficient and all-essential: "By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another." "Whosoever shall do the will of God, the same is my brother, and my sister, and mother."[1] Or, again, as he prays, "That they all may be one; as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us." Love, righteousness, and faith, — the beautiful fruits of the Spirit, — this is the true, the only way to Christian unity.

III. This review of church history has been undertaken to little purpose if it has not shown that religious

[1] See John xiii. 35, Mark iii. 35, John xvii. 21.

unity is not possible by the way of intellectual agreement. "Dogmas may chain together Christians: they cannot unite them." The growth of the human mind, the progress of truth, forbid it. Human minds are as different as human faces. The statement of truth which attracts one repels another. John Ward, preacher, can find a solemn joy in the thought of a sinner brought to judgment, — a thought which to Helen, his wife, is exquisite anguish. The view that satisfied the intellect of a former generation no longer contents the thinking mind of to-day. The statement that expressed the knowledge or trust of a previous age fails to utter the larger information or meet the altered needs of the present time. Restlessness, doubt, unbelief, dissension, and strife are the consequences of all such attempts to cramp and fetter the mind of man with dogmas and creeds.

Furthermore, the great topics of religious faith are in themselves too vast, too exalted, to be compressed into a single statement or series of statements. It is easy to say, "I believe in God;" but who shall dare to analyze and define his majesty and power and goodness? "Such wisdom is too great for me," declares the ancient seer. "It is high; I cannot attain unto it." What presumption on the part of finite man to peer into the mystery of the divine existence, to express the attributes of Deity in a phrase, and declare that he must needs desire this or do that. He — the life and source, the beginning and end of all — is not only greater than our heart: he is infinitely greater than our thought. He is above our comprehension; and to set up a binding dogma concerning him is worse than folly: it is impiety. And so it is with every one of the dogmas by which theologians have thought to solve in their way the mysteries of life and death, of good and evil, of love and

law, of time and eternity. As temporary statements of our conceptions of truth, they have their value and use; but the subjects they deal with are too far above our comprehension to authorize us to claim any infallibility for our opinions or to lay them down as a basis of Christian union.

Religious unity is not possible on the basis of dogma, I said. Neither is it on the ground of a similar church administration or like forms of worship. The temperaments, tastes, and antecedents of men are too various to permit of such uniformity. The inhabitants of the tropical South demand a different form of worship from the men of the sombre North. Some races of men, like the Greeks, Italians, Spaniards, and French, possess a native and inborn love of color, display, and sensuous impression, and desire it in their worship. They would not be content or feel inspired with the simple, bare, introspective worship which satisfies most Protestants. The Roman Catholic demands many ceremonies and forms: the Quaker disdains them all. Are they not both children of God, disciples of Christ, fellow-Christians? And shall we deny them the title unless they will all alike adopt some one particular form of worship?

To the Episcopalian his beautiful order of prayer is the central attraction of the Sunday service, — a complete church in itself. To others it may be formal and uninspiring, — a weariness to the flesh. Let each be fully persuaded in his own mind. The Catholic Christian finds his favorite symbol in the crucifix. To the Puritan's religious consciousness the cross was an object of holy horror. He destroyed it in the English Cathedrals, and even cut the cross of Saint George out of the British flag, and kept it out for many years. To mark his contempt for the symbolism of the papist altar-

service, the Puritan dragged the communion-table — after the Lord's Supper had been partaken from it — down into the body of the church, and converted it into a seat for the lowliest of the audience. Some of the noblest and most devout spirits that have ever lived have cared the least for religious observances and customs. Saint Paul, Calvin, and Luther thought the Sabbath of little account. Paul warns the Galatians that they are in danger of sinking back into Paganism by esteeming one day holier than another. Luther and Calvin even proposed to change the Sabbath to Monday or Friday, to mark their unbelief in it as a divine institution.

It may matter to us, but does it matter to the Infinite One, whether we pray with set form of words, or on our knees, or standing, or looking into our hat, or telling our beads, or making the sign of the cross? The only question with him is whether the heart prays, whether our thoughts are with him, thrilling with the sense of his majesty and mercy, and attentive to his holy will and service.

Now, if all this be true, we shall understand why the Christian world has heretofore failed in its attempts to attain to a union of all followers of Christ. Not by the way of dogma, or rite, or church administration, is this union to be obtained, but "by one spirit are we all baptized to one body."

The Christian virtues, — the love of truth and purity, the love of man, trust in God, the practice of righteousness, and the simple piety of the heart, — these are the only tests, the only possible terms of fellowship. Do you tell me there is nothing specially Christian about these? I answer, It is in these things that the very essence of Christianity consists. It is these moral and devout elements in the religion of Jesus which have

made it the power it is in the world, in spite of the distortions it has received at the hands of doctrinaires and ecclesiastics. If ever there is to be a union of Christians all the world over, it must be on the basis of Christ's life, and not mere opinions about him. Religious character and conduct displayed in likeness to Christ, — this is the only way of union; and, if you tell me that this is a platform broad enough to hold the Buddhist, the Jew, the Mohammedan, and the Agnostic, I reply, "God be thanked all the more!"

Christianity was intended to be a world religion; but it never can become such while it sets up petty barriers to shut out the world, and forgets that, while there may be diversity of gifts and operations, — varieties of thought and worship, — there is one and the self-same spirit in all. All alike, Christian, Jew, and Gentile, Catholic and Protestant, orthodox and liberal, are God's children, the recipients of His bounty, the objects of His love, and joint heirs with Christ in the promises of eternity.

It was in this spirit that the Unitarian National Conference at Saratoga in 1894 adopted the following, and offered it to the Christian world as an all-sufficient basis of Christian union: —

"These churches accept the religion of Jesus, holding, in accordance with his teaching, that practical religion is summed up in love to God and love to man.

"And we invite to our working fellowship any who, while differing from us in belief, are in general sympathy with our spirit and our practical aims."

May other Christian bodies adopt similar platforms, until we all come into "the unity of the spirit and the bonds of peace!"

UNITARIANISM IN AMERICA

A History of its Origin and Development

By George Willis Cooke, Member of the American Historical Association, American Association for the Advancement of Science, American Academy of Political and Social Science, etc.

Size, 5 3-4 x 8 1-2 inches; pages, 463; 21 full-page illustrations; price, $2.00 *net;* postage, 14 cents additional.

THE purpose of this work is to furnish a complete, impartial, and candid record of the origin and growth of American Unitarianism, with accounts of its organization, its progress, and its relation to all present-day movements for social and religious betterment, all of which is presented in "the true spirit of the historical method, without reference to local interests and without sectional preferences." Controversial treatment is thus happily avoided. The author has made long and thorough examination of original manuscripts and journals, as well as many magazines, newspapers, and printed reports of various kinds. The result has been to bring together into a single octavo volume of 475 pages much valuable material, heretofore to be found only in widely scattered sources, and a large array of facts not obtainable elsewhere. The volume is fully indexed, making all references to any one topic readily accessible. The book thus becomes a valuable reference work as well as a thoroughly readable and instructive history. It has been written with special reference to its helpfulness in explaining the Unitarian attitude and temper.

The opening chapters begin with the English Sources of American Unitarianism, followed by chapters upon the Liberal Side of Puritanism, the Growth of Democracy in the Churches, and the Silent Advance of Liberalism. Then follows the organization of the American Unitarian Association, and its various activities as the national executive organization of our churches are fully set forth. Chapters are given to the accounts of the Sunday School Society, the Boston Fraternity of Churches, the Women's National Alliance, the Post-office Mission, and other enterprises which mark the spirit of Unitarian endeavor. The relation of Unitarianism to philanthropy, reforms, education, and literature, receive special chapters of unusual interest. The closing chapter treats of the future of Unitarianism.

In addition to the text itself are twenty-one full-page half-tone portrait illustrations of prominent Unitarian leaders, including a frontispiece of Channing. These grouped pictures add not a little to the general interest of the volume.

AMERICAN UNITARIAN ASSOCIATION
25 Beacon Street, Boston

THE American Unitarian Association is the working missionary organization of the Unitarian churches of America. It seeks to promote sympathy and united action among Liberal Christians, and to spread the principles which are believed by Unitarians to be essential to civil and religious liberty and progress and to the attainments of the spiritual life. To this end it supports missionaries, establishes and maintains churches, holds conventions, aids in building meeting-houses, publishes, sells, and gives away books, sermons, tracts, hymn-books, and devotional works.

Tracts descriptive of Unitarian principles, doctrines, and methods, are sent free to any who desire to know what Liberal Christianity stands for and works for. A list of these free tracts will be sent on application. A full descriptive catalogue of the publications of the Association, including doctrinal, devotional, and practical works, will be sent to all who apply. All religious books by Unitarian authors are kept on sale, and will be sent on receipt of price. A list of such books, with prices, will be furnished upon request.

The Association is supported by the voluntary contributions of churches and individuals. Annual subscriptions of any amount are solicited. Address communications and contributions to the Secretary at his office, 25 Beacon Street, Boston, Mass. The following is the simple

FORM OF BEQUEST.

I give and bequeath to the American Unitarian Association, a corporation established by law in the State of Massachusetts, the sum of.....dollars.

FOURTH SERIES.] [No. 122.

THE

DIVINITY OF MAN.

BY

REV. GEORGE W. KENT.

AMERICAN UNITARIAN ASSOCIATION,
BOSTON.

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THE DIVINITY OF MAN.

If God bids the worm fly, it is because there are wings in the worm, which only bide their time. The worm may lack even feet with which to climb, and seem a helpless, worthless burden in its little world. But wings, as well as feet, are there, and by and by the bee, busy, skilful, honey-laden, will show the fulfilment of God's promise in a wingless and footless worm. Patient and keen observers, like the Swiss Huber and the English Darwin, have taught us to measure even worms with the measuring line of God, and to know that, from the worm to man, we do not have God's creature *made*, we have God's creature in the making. The wings are not there — yet; but wait till God is done before you say that any world of God — within the beehive's humble dome or under the sunlit arch of heaven — is breeding only worms that can neither fly nor climb.

The Divinity of Man, — the great truth that instead of man being a fallen, depraved, and ruined wretch, as the common creeds have taught, he is the child of God, God's own child in the growing, God's own image in the making, — the Divinity of Man is a truth for our best thought and bravest faith to grasp; it is hid to us if we let tradition blind us or pessimism daunt our trust.

Yes, and we must love men to see the divinity within

them. Dogmas that brand men as godless and corrupt will live as long as men feel toward one another hatred and contempt.

I call you to believe with me in the Divinity of Man, because you are people of good-will, as well as people of free thought and fearless faith.

To start with one of the noblest statements of man's divinity, let us go back, with all our Christian fellows, to that hymn of creation, so wonderful in its simplicity and strength, preserved to us in the book of Genesis. Reduced to prose it tells us that God created man in the likeness of Himself, out of His own spirit breathed into him the breath of life, and gave him power to become one with Him in every attribute, — even to eternal life.

The men who dared that splendid faith as to their being and their origin made the fit beginning of a Holy Bible for the strengthening and inspiration of mankind.

And we to-day, who know something of the process of man's creation, who begin to realize the infinite and perfect order fulfilling its infinite and perfect things in man, we who are catching glimpses already of what it is going to mean, as the work goes on, to be a *man*, we are carried back, by all we learn, by all that we can prophesy, to the same faith in man's origin and being, — it was divine, the highest and holiest in all the universe began to be realized on earth, when the human began to be.

So far the faith of all Christendom goes with us, but we go farther still. We believe of the divine creation, thus begun, that it has never failed; we believe of that image of the highest in the human that it has gained instead of lost; we believe in the divinity of man as more richly and completely true of men to-day than at any time from the beginning until now.

And that which our fellow Christians call man's loss of the divine in him, his fall and ruin, we believe was really, as the old Bible story frankly and bravely says it was, the *triumph of the godlike* in him. Here is my little child; in his helpless innocence and ignorance he knows nothing of right or wrong. He fulfils the little circle of his activities all unconscious of what is good and what is ill in the things he does. Nay, but now he does begin to know. He is learning of a right and wrong. He is growing to a sense of duty. He is adding to the language of his thought and sentiment the great word "OUGHT." Shall I call this his fall and ruin? Shall I not rather call it the wondrous step that lifts my little one from the beast to the human, from the animal to the divine?

And this was the heavenward stride in that long march of man from dust to godliness which has been called man's fall. When in the course of His creation God brought his child to a consciousness of duty, to a knowledge of the difference 'twixt good and evil, instead of being a fall, it was the surest birth of the divine the universe had ever seen or creature ever known.

What if it did mean sin! Of course it meant sin. Let us not be frightened out of our faith by that. When you come to realize the range, the character of God's creation of the divine in his beginning of a man, you will not let it stagger you that God's purpose found a place, that his universe makes room, for sin.

In the infinitely great achievement of bringing man from the infancy of his animal existence to the measure of the stature of the manhood of a perfect son of God, all sin, all toils, all tragedies find an all-sufficient and benignant reason for their being. For, let us face the facts. The things that we call evil came by no first

man's disobedience and fall. The pains, the penalties, the toils, the dying, the struggle to survive, the cunning, the ferocity, the selfishness, the appetite and passion, — all were here ages before man existed upon earth.

And it was not the depravity, it was the divinity in man that made sin of them. Had he remained a beast these things had remained an innocence in him, and a meaningless, profitless stain of blood and sweat and tears on God's creation, forever.

But it was man's divinity that dreamt of a freedom made the field of a splendid self-control; of a temper trained from wildness into passion for purity and rectitude; of a cunning lifted into noble skill and generous wisdom; of a self-love broadened into sympathy and sacrifice. It was the divinity in man that set the old beast uses of his power beneath, as no more worthy of him, and strove against their doing as a sin. For man's divinity did more than dream of making the animal within him and the conditions of toil and strife and struggle to exist surrounding him the means of growth as God's child ought to grow. The dreams became his ideals, first dimly seen, then loved, then willed to be his own, then wrought into the fabric of an ever nobler likeness to his Heavenly Father. And that struggle to fulfil an ideal which the divine in him has ever been lifting higher, that struggle out of which is coming the strength of character, the iron will, the godlike might of spirit which God wants in his making of a man, — that struggle accounts for all the history of sin, and points, at least, to what God means by its existence.

Genesis is right; man was created in the image of God, and the faith is sound which says that likeness has increased as the centuries have come and gone. And to-day we men and women, — who are sinless and

perfect by the standards men hallowed a few thousand years ago, — we, to-day, accuse ourselves of sin and imperfection because the divine in us forever sets the ideal far ahead. Instead of destroying my faith in man's divinity, sin reveals to me the price at which a good and wise and loving God was willing to create His likeness in His child. Sin shows me that God counted man's divinity worth all the "evil" of strife and shame and stripes it cost.

And now I want you to note with me two striking instances in which we have evidence of the divine in human nature: of a greatness of thought, of a moral and spiritual insight, of a conscience and sympathy, of an actual holiness and sweetness of life, attained by men and showing them to be indeed the children of the highest.

And I take these instances not because I believe they are the only ones, but because our most orthodox of fellow Christians believe in them as fervently as we ourselves.

I speak first of the Bible. There we have an absolutely and gloriously human product. It is the outcome of outright human nature, at its best for a thousand years. What men have done in noblest thought and deed, what they have felt in their sense of God and duty, what they have made the holiest ideals and passions of their lives, — there we have the transcript of a thousand fertile years of such human experience. It is the literature of men's inmost, truest life, a book the most intensely and greatly human in the literature of the world. And what do Christian people call this wonderful book of man, but *the book of God!* This autobiography of the very soul of man, this very life of man writ down, nine-tenths of them insist to be the very word of God. They would even

deny the marks by which its humanness is shown, its mistakes, its limitations, so ardently do they maintain its evident divinity.

"Yes," we say to them, "it is divine, because the mind and heart of man, out of whose depth and strength it came are divine. It is the book of our erring, imperfect, but divine humanity, searching the universe for the Being that gave it birth, and in whose image it exists, and finding that being and that image in the perfect God of righteousness and love. That is the Bible, and it stands the irrefutable evidence, amid all our low ambitions and ignoble interests, of the higher and diviner being that lives immortal in us.

The other instance of man's divinity I give you is a man. How just it seems to argue that if human nature is essentially divine, if men are the children of God, really growing from an Adam's babyhood toward ever-increasing likeness to their heavenly Father, then surely here and there amongst men will rise some man above his fellows, in whose face the light of God shall shine, from whose heart the love of God shall flow, and through whose life the very breath of God shall seem to breathe in truth and benediction. I believe that men like that have lived in every land and every time.

The good thing I want you to observe with me is this, that every Christian in the world believes it as to one man, anyway.

The man, Jesus of Nazareth, whom no one that ever knew him thought to be anything else than a man; a man, as we are sure he was, in every drop of his blood and every fibre of his manly soul; as simply and truly and grandly a human being as ever lived, — this man was so complete and whole a man, he so achieved the greatness of all that it is to be a man, in him the

divinity of human nature shone forth so beautiful and good that the Christian world with almost a single voice declares that he was God. So convinced are millions of Christian people of man's divinity as manifest in this consummate man, that they overlook his human limitations, they refuse to accept his own sense of imperfection, they ignore his utter dependence upon God, his trusting submission to God's will, and they insist that this great, gentle, generous, godlike man was God himself. What millionfold and persuasive testimony it is to the divine within the human! They tell us that in Jesus was manifested the humanity of God. We answer, Yes, the humanity of God, and the divinity of man.

And you and I believe that over all the world have lived, and are living now, men and women in whom, as in Jesus, can be seen this nearness of God's nature to the human and of human nature to the divine.

Only the other day there passed from out this company a man it did us good to believe in and to love. The same nature and the same spirit that made Jesus the man he was in Nazareth under the conditions of his day, made John Otis the man he was in Worcester under the conditions of his day. There came to me, the evening of his burial the comment of one who had always seemed to measure the worth of men according to their orthodoxy. But of our beloved and sainted dead he said: "That man was stainless, he was Christ-like." Yes, we say, because the Christ and he were both the sons of God, and both were true to the divineness of their being.

Ah! but, you cry to me, it is easy to think this, easy to believe it all of men like these, but there are wicked, selfish, desperate men. Where will you find divinity in them? I ask you to mark with me how one man looked on just such men, and how he treated them.

In his world of long ago were wicked, shameless men, — and women too. More hopelessly bad and outcast than to-day, for society was more cruel to its sinners and made it harder for them to recover. And they were sinning on in sheer abandon to their fate, despairing that any better way was possible to them. One man there was who had more faith in them than that. He was no shrewd man of the world, this Galilean prophet. He had not learnt to set down any child of God as reprobate. He believed their evil doing was not the true expression of their being, that by inmost and indestructible affinity they belonged to a diviner way of life.

And in that sublime and simple faith of his he called them to arise with him and together they would be God's ministers on earth. And behold, wicked men, abandoned women, rose and went with him, and out of sinners and outcasts, saints and heroes came.

Where was the strength of his appeal? It was where he believed it to be. It was in them. The way of sin was not their real way. True they had taken it, making ill-doing the very business of their lives; but it was by letting low conditions, evil habits overmaster them, it was by surrender to despair, it was not by the nature and constitution of their being. You remember how Jesus said of the prodigal, not in his rioting and drunkenness, not acting the beast, but repentant, and turning homeward, acting the man again. "He came to *himself*." And you have but to follow any who have ever turned from wickedness to be the disciples of such a one as Jesus, you have but to note their coming to themselves, their joy in the new life, to conclude, as you compare it with the unrest, the wretchedness they have left behind, that in the order of the universe, and by the very gravitation of their

nature, human beings belong to what is good and sane and godlike, and not to the madness and selfishness of sin.

Such was the faith of Jesus in the worth, the divinity of man. He believed it of saints and he believed it of sinners too. He believed it of them all. If that could be his faith in the days of a Herod and a Pontius Pilate, shall we not dare to make it ours to-day?

Yes, and finally, right there, in that faith of Jesus in man's divinity, let us hear the call of his Gospel to ourselves. There let us find the bond of our fellowship with him.

Why shall we be followers of Jesus and try to make the spirit of his life our own? Because we are condemned and sentenced wretches, doomed to perish unless we accept his sacrifice? Because we can do nothing of ourselves and only he can save us?

No! a thousand times, no! He is our Master, our Exemplar, because he is our Brother. Because for life like his we too were born into the world. Because to be like him is the one true fulfilment of our human nature. Because in being less than Christlike men and women we are not yet our completest selves.

He has no easy life for us to live, no heaven to be won by helplessness. He bids us to be as great and generous as he showed himself to be; he sets us duties worthy the sons and daughters of the highest; yea, he has for us the sublime ambition, which demands an immortality to seek it in, — that we be perfect as our Father, God, is perfect. And we, — we give him our allegiance, we pledge him our lives, we rise out of our weakness, we break with our despair, we set under foot our sin, and we go forth with him to the achievement of the perfect. For we believe that, with him, and like

him, we are children of the perfect God, and sharers in the divinity of our Father.

"Man is a worm, and the son of man a worm," they say to us. Yes, but God bids man seek the highest and soar to the divine, and we believe the wings to do it with are in this worm.

"Shy yearnings of the savage,
Unfolding thought by thought,
To holy lives are lifted,
To visions fair are wrought;
The races rise and cluster,
And evils fade and fall,
Till chaos blooms to beauty,
Thy purpose crowning all!"

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GOD OR MAN?

A BRIEF EXAMINATION OF THE DOCTRINE OF THE DEITY OF JESUS CHRIST.

BY

REV. HERBERT H. MOTT.

AMERICAN UNITARIAN ASSOCIATION,

BOSTON.

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The Brotherhood of Man.
The Leadership of Jesus.
Salvation by Character.
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In the love of the truth, and the spirit of Jesus Christ, we unite for the worship of God and the service of man.

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(*As expressed in the By-Laws of the American Unitarian Association*).

"The object of the American Unitarian Association shall be to diffuse the knowledge and promote the interests of pure Christianity; and all Unitarian Christians shall be invited to unite and co-operate with it for that purpose."

(*As expressed by the National Conference of Unitarian and Other Christian Churches, at Saratoga, N. Y., in 1894.*)

"These Churches accept the religion of Jesus, holding, in accordance with his teaching, that practical religion is summed up in love to God and love to man.

"The Conference recognizes the fact that its constituency is Congregational in tradition and polity. Therefore, it declares that nothing in this Constitution is to be construed as an authoritative test; and we cordially invite to our working fellowship any who, while differing from us in belief, are in general sympathy with our spirit and our practical aims."

GOD OR MAN?

A BRIEF EXAMINATION OF THE DOCTRINE OF THE DEITY OF JESUS CHRIST.

STATEMENT OF THE DOCTRINE, WITH THE ARGUMENTS COMMONLY USED IN SUPPORT OF IT.

Trinitarian Christianity teaches the Deity, or Godhead, of Jesus. Not merely that he was divine, but that he was God Almighty.

Unitarian Christianity teaches the divine humanity of Jesus. Not that he was God Almighty, but that he was a divine man, a man filled with the spirit of God, differing from other men in *degree*, but not in essential nature; for every man and woman is a child of God, and therefore divine.

Unitarian Christianity does not deprive Christ of his divinity, but extends his divinity to all the race.[1]

[1] Observe the difference between the terms "Deity" and "Divinity." They are often confused in a misleading way.

Deity means Godhead, God himself.

Divinity usually means godlike, divine; that is, partaking of the divine nature, having godlike qualities.

In this sense the term may be used of Jesus.

First. — Argument from the Greatness of his Love.

It is said the evidence of his Deity is the greatness of his love. God is love. Jesus was God because he

had so much more love and sympathy and charity than any man ever had.

Granted that Jesus possessed a greater love for his fellow-creatures than any one who had gone before him. How would that prove him to be more than man?

If Plato had a greater intellect than any philosopher who went before him, we should say that proved him to be, not more than a philosopher, but simply the greatest among philosophers. So the possession by Jesus of more love than any man who preceded him, proves him to be, not more than a man, but the most loving among men.

But it may be said it is impossible for a mere human being to love as he did. Who shall set a bound to the possibilities of human love?

When Jesus gave to his disciples the two great commandments of love to God and man, he set no limit to that love. On the contrary, he expressly affirms that there are no limits to what we must strive to attain, and therefore to what we are capable of attaining, in that direction.

There could not be a more unqualified affirmation of the boundless capacities of the human soul than the tremendous injunction, "Be ye perfect, even as your heavenly Father is perfect."

In face of this, we cannot venture to assert that the love manifested in the life of Jesus was beyond the power of a man.

Again, what is the test of love?

It is the willingness to give of self for the sake of the beloved. Jesus gave all, — thought, labor, life. He was willing to endure whatever had to be endured in the service of man. A glorious sacrifice. But it is surely an injustice to the human race to say that he alone has been willing to do this. There have been

many holy men and women who have given all, and suffered all for the sake of their fellows.

This does not take away in the least from Christ's title to the leadership of men. That title is his due, not because his love and sacrifice were more than human, but because his conceptions have a broader range and sweep, and his ideals a nobler aim than those of any other religious teacher.

Second. — Argument from his Sinlessness.

It is said, Christ was without sin, and therefore must be more than human.

Surely, sinlessness would not prove him to be more than human. Did not the Master himself urge us to strive after perfection? "Be ye perfect, even as your Father in heaven is perfect," he said. Is not a perfect man, necessarily, a sinless man?

It would seem, therefore, that Jesus regarded sinlessness as a condition quite possible for human nature.

Third. — Argument from the Nature of his Work.

It is said Christ was God because of the nature of the work he did.

How can Christ's Deity be proved from the nature of his work? By showing that it was of such a kind as to be impossible to man, and possible only to God.

How can it be shown that Christ's work was impossible to man? By showing that it differs from all human work, not merely in degree, but in nature and kind. A difference in degree will not suffice, because there is no perceptible limit to the possible development of human powers. We must show that Christ's work was altogether of a *different nature* from any-

thing man had ever attempted. And this cannot be shown.

What was the nature of Christ's work? what did he do? The *first* and more rigidly orthodox view is that he redeemed men from the wrath of God on account of the fall of Adam. But the fall of Adam is a myth. The only evidences for it are the first two chapters of Genesis; and all modern criticism agrees that these two chapters are not the record of an actual event, but a poetical and figurative tradition, — a poem, not a history.

Now, it is clear that, if there was no fall, there was no wrath on the part of God; and there can be no need of a redemption from that wrath. The work of Christ, therefore, did not consist in the redemption of men from the wrath of God.

The second view of Christ's work is that it was one of revelation and of quickening example.

He taught, in a more effective way than had ever been done before, the Fatherhood of God, the brotherhood of man, the supremacy of love; and he convinced men of the truth of what he taught by the absolute sincerity and beauty of his own life.

He produced a new type of character, one in which self-forgetfulness, humility, love, are the impulses.

He was thus the source of new life, of nobler aspirations, of a diviner spirit, of a greater sensitiveness to sin, the effect of which has worked and is working incalculable good, helping to transform and uplift the world.

With this view of the nature of the work of Jesus, Unitarian Christianity is heartily at one. But does it prove that Christ was God? On the contrary, it proves him to have been a man; for, while his may be a greater work than that of others, it differs from theirs only in degree, not in kind.

If Jesus revealed great truths, and gave to the world nobler ideas concerning God and man, duty and destiny, if he made men better and happier, transformed their characters, and inspired them by his example to suffer and endure, and to live purer, holier lives, others have done this also in their several degrees.

The fatherhood of God, the brotherhood of man, the supremacy of love, were taught long before the time of Christ, though never so beautifully or so well.

Buddha, Confucius, Zoroaster, Socrates, Moses, and Mohammed, all gave to the world nobler ideals, purer motives, than had existed before. They brought about a better condition of individual and social life among vast sections of the human race previously submerged in barbarism. They produced in Asia, Africa, and Europe a spiritual awakening, and created new and finer types of character. They made men want to do right, they quickened their aspirations after goodness and peace by furnishing them with new ideals and new examples of a more effective and powerful kind than had been furnished before, — motives that appealed more strongly to men's conscience and reason, to men's hearts and minds and moral natures.

And this is just what Jesus did; only, he went a step further and higher.

The work of Jesus differed from the work of these men only as their work itself differed from that of the heroes and saints who went before them; namely, in the nobility of its ideals and conceptions and the greater range of its effectiveness.

The work of Jesus touched the highest point, and attained the greatest effectiveness of any; and this proves him to have been, not more than a man, but the greatest among men.

Fourth. — Argument from Mystery.

It is said we must believe the doctrine of Christ's Godhead as a mystery. But it is not a mystery.

A mystery is something we cannot understand, yet which we feel in some sense, nevertheless, exists.

Now, Christ's Godhead we can understand. We recognize it as a contradiction; and, if our feelings tell us anything about it, they tell us it cannot possibly exist.

We *know* that the *same person* cannot be both infinite God and finite man.

The spirit of the infinite God may, and we believe does, dwell in finite man; but that is a very different thing. That is a true mystery.

The doctrine of Christ's Godhead, or of the Trinity, affirms the finite man to be *equal to* the infinite God. It is, therefore, nothing but flat contradiction; and we understand contradiction, we know what we mean by it, and what it is ; there is nothing mysterious about it.

The Trinity, therefore, being a contradiction, is not a mystery.

Fifth. — Argument from the Texts.

It is said Jesus was God, because the Bible says so.

For a long time, among Protestants at least, the doctrine of Christ's Deity was held solely on what was supposed to be the conclusive evidence of certain so-called proof-texts in the Bible.

The more careful examination brought to bear on the question during the last fifty years has shown that this evidence is really of little weight.

The Principal Texts Used in Support of the Doctrine are: —

"Behold, a virgin shall be with child, and shall bring forth a son, and they shall call his name Immanuel." — Matthew i. 23.

"In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God." — John i. 1.

"I and the Father are one." — John x. 30.

"He that hath seen me hath seen the Father." John xiv. 9.

"Thomas answered and said unto him, My Lord and my God." — John xx. 28.

"The word which he sent unto the children of Israel, preaching good tidings of peace by Jesus Christ (he is Lord of all)." — Acts x. 36.

"Of whom is Christ as concerning the flesh, who is over all, God blessed for ever. Amen." — Romans ix. 5.

"Looking for the blessed hope and appearing of the glory of our great God and Saviour Jesus Christ." — Titus ii. 13.

"This is the true God, and eternal life." — 1 John v. 20.

Three Reasons why the Above Texts cannot be accepted as Proofs that Christ was God.

First Reason: —

The weight and number of contrary texts.

Even if every one of the foregoing passages affirmed with perfect clearness the Godhead of Jesus, there are so many more passages which affirm with at least equal clearness the contrary, that the weight of evidence would still be on the Unitarian side.

The following are a few only out of a great number of passages which directly contradict the idea of Christ's

Deity, speaking of him as distinct from and as subordinate to God, or as being sent by God, or as being his Son, or as praying to God, etc. : —

"This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased." — MATTHEW iii. 17.

"Behold my servant, whom I have chosen." — MATTHEW xii. 18.

"And he took the seven loaves and the fishes; and he gave thanks." — MATTHEW xv. 36.

"And he went forward a little, and fell on his face, and prayed, saying, O my Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass away from me : nevertheless not as I will, but as thou wilt." — MATTHEW xxvi. 39.

(See context.)

"To sit on my right hand, and on my left hand, is not mine to give, but it is for them for whom it hath been prepared of my Father." — MATTHEW xx. 23.

"But he withdrew himself in the deserts, and prayed." — LUKE v. 16.

"He went out into the mountain to pray." — LUKE vi. 12.

(See also Luke ix. 18 and 28.)

"Jesus saith unto them, My meat is to do the will of him that sent me, and to accomplish his work." — JOHN iv. 34.

"The works which the Father hath given me to accomplish, the very works that I do, bear witness of me, that the Father hath sent me.

"And the Father which sent me, he hath borne witness of me. Ye have neither heard his voice at any time, nor seen his form."

"I am come in my Father's name." — JOHN v. 36, 37, 43.

(See the whole chapter.)

"For I am come down from heaven, not to do mine own will, but the will of him that sent me."

"No man can come to me, except the Father which sent me draw him." — JOHN vi. 38, 44.

(See the whole chapter.)

"This commandment received I from my Father."—JOHN x. 18.

"Jesus therefore said, Yet a little while am I with you, and I go unto him that sent me." — JOHN vii. 33.

(See context.)

"I have kept my Father's commandments, and abide in his love." — JOHN xv. 10.

(See context.)

"The Father is greater than I." — JOHN xiv. 28.

(See context.)

"The cup which the Father hath given me, shall I not drink it?" — JOHN xviii. 11.

"Jesus saith to her, Touch me not; for I am not yet ascended unto the Father: but go unto my brethren, and say to them, I ascend unto my Father and your Father, and my God and your God." — JOHN xx. 17.

Such passages as the foregoing are clearly incompatible with Christ's Deity, and they very greatly outnumber the texts supposed to be on the other side.

Second Reason: —

The Trinitarian interpretation of the texts is erroneous.

So far are these so-called proof-texts from containing a clear statement of the Godhead of Jesus that every one of them is capable of another and more reasonable interpretation.

"Behold, a virgin shall be with child, and shall bring forth a son, and they shall call his name Immanuel." — MATTHEW i. 23.

This is a quotation from Isaiah vii. 14. The name Immanuel means "God with us," just as the name Elijah signifies "God the Lord," and Timothy, "Glory of God."

No one pretends that the names which Elijah and Timothy bore were meant to signify that they were other than men. Why, then, should the name Immanuel applied to Jesus signify that he was other than a man?

But there is nothing whatever to show that the writer of the chapter of Isaiah in which the expression occurs meant it to apply to Christ or knew anything about Christ. He undoubtedly meant it to apply to a Jewish prince of his own time.

It was a common habit of the Jews to quote from their Scriptures and to apply old texts to modern instances, often with very small justification, — a practice not unknown in our own day among other than Jews.

Read the seventh and eighth chapters of Isaiah, and you will feel that "the words were spoken of a temporal and war-like prince, not of a spiritual leader."

"In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God." — JOHN i. 1.

Where is the reference to Jesus?

There is none except on the assumption that "Word" ("Logos" in the Greek original) means Jesus. And there is not the slightest evidence that it does.

Why did not John, if he meant to declare plainly the Deity of Jesus Christ, introduce his Gospel by saying: —

"In the beginning was the *Son*, and the Son was with the Father, and the Son was the Father."

The natural conclusion is that he was not thinking of the Deity of Christ when he wrote the first verse of his book.

You will feel convinced of this if you read on a little way; for in verse 18 it is asserted that "no man hath seen God," which would not be true if Jesus were God.

"I and the Father are one." — JOHN x. 30.

This would seem as if Jesus meant to say that he was actually the same as God. A careful reading of the context and of other passages will show, however, that he did not mean this.

In the seventeenth chapter, for instance, he says, verse 11, speaking of his disciples: —

"Holy Father, keep them in thy name, that *they may be one even as we are.*"

Again, verses 21–23: —

"*That they may all be one; even as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be in us:* . . . and the glory which thou hast given me I have given unto them; that they may be one, even as we are one; I in them, and thou in me, that they may be perfected into one;" etc.

From this it would follow that the *disciples are equal with God* as well as Christ, for they are said *to be one even as Christ and the Father are one.*

What Jesus doubtless meant was, not that he and the Father were one in nature and person, but simply *one in the great object of helping mankind, one in purpose and spirit,* as were the disciples also.

"He that hath seen me hath seen the Father." — JOHN xiv. 9.

If you take this to mean that Christ was God, you will find yourself in irreconcilable conflict with the context, in which Jesus speaks *repeatedly* of himself as distinct from God.

In verse 2 he speaks of "my Father's house." In verse 6 he speaks of himself as the "way" to the Father, not as the Father himself. In verse 16 he speaks of *praying* to the Father.

Notice the tone of the whole chapter. Throughout it

Jesus refers to God as one to whom he looks for help, strength, commandment.

If, however, you take the words in verse 9 in a figurative sense, as meaning he who hath seen me hath seen the representative of the Father, hath seen one in whom dwelleth the spirit of the Father, hath seen one who teaches the nature, character, and purposes of the Father, then you will find no difficulty in the context.

Any other interpretation would seem to be prohibited by John i. 18, "No man hath seen God."

"Thomas answered and said unto him, My Lord and my God." — JOHN XX. 28.

If you interpret this as meaning that Thomas declares Jesus to be God, you put Thomas in direct opposition, *first*, to his Master, who in verse 17 says, "I ascend unto my Father and your Father, and my God and your God;" *second*, to the writer of the Gospel, who in verse 31 says, "But these are written, that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the *Son of God*."

If, on the other hand, you take the words simply as the unthinking exclamation of a man utterly amazed at finding himself in the presence of one whom he believed to be dead, then all difficulty with the context disappears.

"The word which he sent unto the children of Israel, preaching good tidings of peace by Jesus Christ (he is Lord of all)." — ACTS X. 36.

An intelligent reading of the context will show that, whatever the writer may have meant by this expression, he certainly did not mean that Christ was God; for he speaks of him as being sent by God, and as being anointed by God. The thought in the writer's mind was probably that Christ was Lord, leader, or head of all Christians, or of all men, Jews and Gentiles.

"My kinsmen according to the flesh: who are Israelites; . . . and of whom is Christ as concerning the flesh, who is over all, God blessed for ever. Amen." — ROMANS ix. 3, 4, 5.

It is only the faulty translation and punctuation of the authorized version that has made it possible to cite this text as evidence of the Deity of Jesus.

The revised version gives the more accurate rendering in a marginal note, as follows: —

"And of whom is Christ as concerning the flesh. He who is God over all is blessed for ever. Amen."

The American members of the Revising Committee prefer the following punctuation and arrangement, as, in their opinion, giving the meaning more exactly: —

"And of whom is Christ as concerning the flesh: He who is over all, God, be blessed for ever. Amen."

Whichever of these two corrected forms you take, it is equally clear that the expression about God does not refer to the previous sentence, — that is, to Christ, — but is simply a solemn ascription or doxology used to close that particular section of the Epistle.

A similar form is found in Paul's Second Epistle to the Corinthians, xii. 31: thus, "The God and Father of the Lord Jesus, he who is blessed for evermore."

By far the best way to arrive at an understanding of the meaning of the phrase is to compare it with the rest of Paul's writings.

Doing so, we find that Paul never speaks of Jesus as God over all, but, on the contrary, clearly distinguishes him from God. See —

"To us there is one God, the Father, . . . and one Lord Jesus Christ." — 1 CORINTHIANS viii. 4–6.

Again: —

"One Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all." — EPHESIANS iv. 6.

And very many other passages.

Surely, the right and reasonable way is to interpret this single doubtful phrase in the sense of the very numerous phrases that are not doubtful, instead of interpreting the numerous phrases in the sense of the single one.

"Looking for the blessed hope and appearing of the glory of our great God and Saviour Jesus Christ." — TITUS ii. 13.

This is another instance of the inaccurate rendering of the authorized version. The revised version gives it in a marginal note, as follows: —

"Looking for the blessed hope and appearing of the glory of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ."

The want of clearness in this text results probably from errors in copying. The insertion of the word "our" makes the meaning clearer, but it is still a somewhat obscure phrase.

All we can do is to interpret it by the context; only a few sentences further on (iii. 4–6) we find Paul speaking of "God our Saviour" as being our Saviour in "the principal and absolute sense;" and of "Christ our Saviour," as being so in the secondary and instrumental sense. "God," he says, "pours out the Holy Ghost upon us 'through Jesus Christ our Saviour.'"

Thus Paul evidently thinks of them as distinct; he does not intend to call Christ our great God. And so in many other places, some of which have been already quoted.

"This is the true God, and eternal life." — 1 JOHN v. 20.

It has been asserted that "this" refers to Christ, and that therefore the writer affirms Christ to be the true God.

This is evidently an error; for throughout the rest of the Epistle Christ is plainly and clearly spoken of, not as God, but as God's son. "The 'this' refers to the God who is imparted to us through Christ."

Third Reason: —

The inaccuracy of the gospel narratives on questions of historical fact.

The New Testament contains many inaccuracies, and is not, therefore, a trustworthy witness on questions of historical fact. From a document of such a nature we should require more than a few isolated sentences to prove so extraordinary an assertion as the Godhead of Jesus.

Those who have not studied minutely the narratives of the Gospels have little idea of the number of inaccuracies they contain.

It will be found that the accounts of the descent, the birthplace, the birth, the childhood, the ministry, and the death of Jesus, all contain conflicting and irreconcilable statements.

I will mention two only as examples: one from the beginning, and one from the end of the gospel story.

The *first* instance is in the account of the descent of Jesus. Two pedigrees are given, one in Matthew, the other in Luke; but they do not agree. Not only is one nearly twice as long as the other, but the individual names in a large number of cases are different. For instance, Matthew says the grandfather of Jesus was Jacob, while Luke gives the name of Heli; and the ancestors of the preceding eight or ten generations are nearly all different in the two lists.

The *second* instance is the inscription on the cross. Consider the want of precision with which this is given.

Here was a *written* inscription, short and simple, which might, one would think, have been correctly copied. Yet each of the four Gospels gives it differently: —

"This is Jesus the King of the Jews." — MATTHEW xxvii. 37.

"The King of the Jews." — MARK xv. 26.

"This is the King of the Jews." — LUKE xxiii. 38.

"Jesus of Nazareth, the King of the Jews." — JOHN xix. 19.

Now, these small discrepancies are important for this reason, that they show the narrative to have been loosely put together, without any attempt at literal and careful preciseness.

And it is plain that a narrative which is inaccurate in one particular may be inaccurate in another; and it behooves us, therefore, to receive its statements with caution.

The existence of these inaccuracies does not lessen the value of the New Testament as an impulse to devotion and a spiritual guide. The inspiration of the noble life of Jesus does not depend on the care with which the historian records the place of his birth or the outward circumstances of his death.

Statements of moral and spiritual truth stand on a different level from statements of historical fact.

We carry within our hearts a touchstone to gauge and to confirm the former, and we recognize that here the utterances of the Gospels are matchless in their beauty, and profoundly true.

But with respect to such a statement as that a certain child born at a certain time and place was the Almighty Maker of the heavens and the earth, for the veracity of such a statement, we have no inward test. We must depend wholly on the weight of external evidence. And the evidence of a narrative, the authors of which

did not care apparently about precision in matters of fact, cannot be accepted as sufficient.

The Harm of Believing Jesus was God.

It perplexes the reason and bewilders the mind, and religious faith which rests on a bewildering foundation is apt to be of little use in the hour of need. It estranges us from God.

The practical effect of the doctrine is to make the thought of God's universal presence more difficult.

For, if he came to dwell on earth only in the person of Jesus, then his relations with men seem to be narrowed to a single point, to a brief, solitary, isolated period of thirty or forty years.

Before and since, God has dwelt apart from the world, except in so far as the Holy Ghost is said to dwell in the hearts of those who have been received into the Church. This is, however, but a fraction of the human race.

Thus, communion between heaven and earth is reduced to a single channel; namely, the person and church of Christ; and, as the existence of this channel is necessarily unknown to the greater part of mankind, they are, through no fault of their own, hopelessly cut off from God.

It estranges us from Christ.

If he be God, he is taken up out of the range of human sympathies. We cannot hope to attain unto the fulness of the measure of his stature. His example becomes a delusion, with no possible application to our feeble selves. We cannot expect to emulate the Omnipotent.

It imparts to the story of his life a note of insincerity.

If he be the Infinite and Almighty, then "his sufferings must be unreal, his temptations a dramatic show."

His prayers must be little better than a hollow form; for, if Christ were God, then, when Christ prayed, the Infinite would be praying to the Infinite. — an act without use or purpose or significance.

The Gain of Believing Jesus was a Man.

It brings him into natural and simple relations with us. It is a doctrine easily understood and in accord with reason. It makes his struggles, sacrifice, and martyrdom real, and his example effective.

If Jesus be a man, we can sympathize with his sufferings and his strife, we can emulate his example, we can be like him; while, if he be God, the attempt is hopeless.

It gives a dignity to human nature, and lifts it near to God. If the nature of man be capable of reaching such divine heights, then it must surely be very precious in God's sight, and destined to a glorious and undying future. The humanity of Jesus thus reveals the intrinsic worth of our own humanity.

It brings God near to us. Every one admits that the spirit of God dwelt in the soul of Jesus, that he was in close and intimate touch with the heavenly Father. Now, if Jesus was a man, then the dwelling of God's spirit in him is proof that it may dwell also in us, and that we also may be in close and intimate touch with God. It strengthens our faith in the truth of Paul's words, "The spirit of God dwelleth in you." And to know that he is here, in and with us, even as he was in and with Jesus, is evidence that we are not deserted, is assurance of divine help and sympathy, is a ground of joyful and enthusiastic confidence.

It gives a deeper meaning to the doctrine of incarnation. If Jesus be one of us, and if we share with him

the indwelling spirit of God, then God's incarnation is universal, instead of solitary and isolated. He is immanent and incarnate in the soul of every child born into the world.

It extends and enriches the revelation of God's love. The value of the doctrine that Christ was God is said to be that it makes the love of God comprehensible and real, and brings it within the range of our thought. In the loving and benevolent figure of Jesus we behold, revealed in a way which all can understand, the love and benevolence of God.

But, surely, the teaching of Unitarian Christianity that the spirit of God was *not only* in Jesus, but *is in every righteous and loving soul*, extends, enlarges, enriches, the revelation; for in that case every good and loving soul bears testimony to the love and goodness of the Father. Instead of beholding the evidence of God's benevolence and affection at a single point, we behold it at many points. Instead of a solitary witness we have a great cloud of witnesses.

Ralph Waldo Emerson

By Rev. Edward Everett Hale, D.D. To which are added two early Essays of Emerson

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THE address which forms the first part of this little volume was delivered before the Brooklyn Institute at the ninetieth anniversary of Emerson's birth, and is made up of affectionate reminiscences and grateful appreciation of the Concord philosopher. Emerson is here presented, not in the rôle of philosopher, poet, reformer, but as a strong, simple, practical, every-day man. This side of Emerson's character has been too little dwelt upon by his biographers, and for that reason this book, written by a personal friend, well qualified in mind and heart to understand his subject, finds a real place in literature. To the charm of the style is added the freshness of personal experience.

The latter half of the volume consists of two early essays of Emerson written when he was a college undergraduate, and are not included in his collected works. It is interesting to note how the thought and style of the youth, which are staid and unimpassioned, differ from those of the man in his maturity. Yet they are characterized by originality and vigor of treatment, and give promise of unusual intellectual prowess. Their titles are: "The Character of Socrates" and "The Present State of Ethical Philosophy."

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CHANNING'S NOTE-BOOK

Passages from the Unpublished Manuscripts of William Ellery Channing. Selected by his granddaughter, Grace Ellery Channing

Size, 4 3-4 x 7; pages, 110; price, 50 cents *net;* postage, 6 cents.

THE origin and character of this book add to the interest of the contents, in that the "Notes," of which it is made up, are from the unpublished manuscripts left by Channing. They have been carefully gathered, and are here given without revision or change of any kind. The desire to preserve their integrity has resulted in the retention of the incomplete sentences and abrupt constructions of the original, which were written for purposes of personal reference. This is more than atoned for, however, in the vigor and freedom of expression, and the entire absence of self-restraint, which bring one into closer touch with the characteristics of Channing's thought and character. The Notes are arranged in topics, under such headings as Society, Friendship, Fear, Duty, Inspiration, Woman, Life, Death, Destiny, Matter, Aspiration, Sensation, Memory, and many others. They are not at all theological in character or treatment, and for that reason they present in this form another and broader view of Channing himself.

THOUGHTS SELECTED FROM THE WRITINGS OF REV. WILLIAM E. CHANNING, D.D.

Compiled by Henry A. Miles

Size, 3 3-4 x 4 3-4; pages, 160; price, 30 cents *net;* postage, 4 cents.

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25 Beacon Street, Boston

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Tracts descriptive of Unitarian principles, doctrines, and methods, are sent free to any who desire to know what Liberal Christianity stands for and works for. A list of these free tracts will be sent on application. A full descriptive catalogue of the publications of the Association, including doctrinal, devotional, and practical works, will be sent to all who apply. All religious books by Unitarian authors are kept on sale, and will be sent on receipt of price. A list of such books, with prices, will be furnished upon request.

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FOURTH SERIES.] [No. 124.

THE DIVINE MEANING OF LIFE.

BY

REV. RICHARD W. BOYNTON.

AMERICAN UNITARIAN ASSOCIATION,

BOSTON.

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The Brotherhood of Man.
The Leadership of Jesus.
Salvation by Character.
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onward and upward forever.

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In the love of the truth, and the spirit of Jesus Christ, we unite for the worship of God and the service of man.

Our Declaration

(*As expressed in the By-Laws of the American Unitarian Association.*)

"The object of the American Unitarian Association shall be to diffuse the knowledge and promote the interests of pure Christianity; and all Unitarian Christians shall be invited to unite and co-operate with it for that purpose."

(*As expressed by the National Conference of Unitarian and Other Christian Churches, at Saratoga, N. Y., in 1894.*)

"These Churches accept the religion of Jesus, holding, in accordance with his teaching, that practical religion is summed up in love to God and love to man.

"The Conference recognizes the fact that its constituency is Congregational in tradition and polity. Therefore, it declares that nothing in this Constitution is to be construed as an authoritative test; and we cordially invite to our working fellowship any who, while differing from us in belief, are in general sympathy with our spirit and our practical aims."

THE DIVINE MEANING OF LIFE.

'Ye are not your own; for ye are bought with a price.' — 1 Cor. vi. 19, 20.

These words have a significance quite apart from the doctrine of a vicarious atonement, with which they are usually associated. They suggest a truth of universal application. In sober fact, we are not our own. No one of us is justified in claiming absolute ownership either over himself or over anything he may possess. For we are bought with a price, and everything we have is bought with a price also.

People say of a certain man that he is rich. He has inherited wealth, or by force of superior ability has built up a fortune. But neither he himself, nor those from whom he may have acquired what he possesses, alone created this or could create it. Such a man depends for his present security upon the honesty of public and private servants, whom he is obliged continually to trust. His life is safe only because of the general orderliness of the community in which he lives. His pleasures come to him through the instrumentality of others. His daily knowledge of the world's affairs, his years of foreign travel, his quiet hour at home in his library, are made possible to him by the hand labor and the soul labor, much of it too poorly paid, of other men and women, great or humble, living or dead.

In proportion as one has to make his way upward from lowly beginnings, his dependence upon others may seem to be lessened. Still, even the poorest child born yesterday, comes at once into a heritage that he can never claim as all his own.

The very language which he will soon begin to use is the gift of mankind. It had its birth when man himself was but a child, and has been taking shape on human lips ever since. Homer and Dante and Chaucer and Shakespeare used it and have moulded it. It comes to the child set with the royal jewels of thought that by and by will shed their clear light into his growing mind. Most of the knowledge that he will require for his guidance in life will come to him through this single medium.

The food that nourishes the slender life, the clothing that warms it, the house that shelters it, are alike products of the unceasing toil of man. How many hands were concerned in preparing the special delicacy that just fills his tiny need, the child may never realize. What processes of manufacture the light material of his first little dress underwent, he does not even dimly suspect. What invention, what care, what patience, went into the building and furnishing of the house he lives in, he will be long in discovering. Even the marvellous body he inhabits is not his own; for upon it are the marks of the endurance, the conflicts, the virtues, or the vices of the ancestry that bore him.

We are not our own. We are in the habit of accepting these gifts of home and food and speech and life itself as matters of course. But they are not ours by any inherent right. Not all men can possess them in the degree that we are permitted to do. These things do not belong to us to abuse or neglect or throw away. They are the slow, painful creations of the entire race of men whose heirs it is our privilege to be. They represent the price that had

to be paid that we might live — the price in bloodshed and agony and tears, with which the whole creation groaneth and travaileth until now.

Behind these toils of man stands the creative power of God. It is he that hath made us, and not we ourselves. What we have contributed to our own existence and happiness is as nothing compared with what he has given us. In the language of the Apostle, "Whether we live, we live unto the Lord, or whether we die, we die unto the Lord; whether we live, therefore, or die, we are the Lord's." We are his by virtue of the infinite care and labor by which we have come to exist. Our lives, then, do not belong entirely to ourselves. In them and by means of them not our narrow, perhaps selfish, purposes are to be fulfilled, but the larger, grander purposes of God. This is the divine meaning of life.

We may see this meaning exemplified in the way that certain lives have been chosen, all unconsciously to themselves, to serve the divinest ends. Some of the associates of Jesus are good examples of what I mean. The chance wayfarer from Samaria, who was kind to the poor Judean on the road from Jerusalem to Jericho, never dreamed of going down to posterity as the "Good Samaritan." The rich young ruler, whom Jesus regretfully allowed to turn away from his greatest opportunity, the penitent Zaccheus, the generous Joseph of Arimathea, knew nothing of the warning or the example that their acts would be to races and ages then unborn. So, too, the soft-eyed Italian mother whose face and figure Raphael reproduced in his "Sistine Madonna" little thought that her motherhood, so new, so wonderful, was to become forever the type of holy, divine maternity to the world. The brown-faced, hard-handed French peasants, whose bent forms Millet saw and painted near his home at Barbizon, could not have believed that their devoutness

in "The Angelus" would have the power to make all men see anew

"How nigh is grandeur to our dust."

The New England farmer, whom our own sculptor French has immortalized in his Concord statue of the "Minute-man," holding with one hand the plough, from which he is just turning, while he grasps his flintlock with the other and looks searchingly across the meadows for the foe, did not take that attitude expecting to impress a great nation of free people with the nobleness of his unflinching patriotism.

All these plain, common men and women merely acted their part in the place where it had pleased God to put them. They were not angels or principalities or powers, but human beings like ourselves. Yet God has set them before us as shining examples of life's possibilities. He showed to some artist or poet or great teacher their relations to all human need and endeavor, and without their being conscious of it they have added immeasurably to the spiritual treasures of our race.

But what the sculptor or the painter may see in some single life, whose pathos or yearning or heroism appeals to his human sympathy, that God sees in every life. He sees the pathos the yearning, the heroism, in your life and in mine. He sees, further, as not even the most gifted of men can see, how each of us, if he will, can link his life inseparably with something that is great and stirring and eternally significant.

We find that some men have been half aware of this larger meaning of their lives. The discovery may have come to them through their having been a part of some great movement or in touch with some kindling personality. You could have found, a few years since in England, a handful of aged men who were survivors of the

battle of Waterloo. They may have been boys who held the officers' horses, or played in the band, or in some other capacity had as little to do with deciding the battle as the blades of grass on which the rain fell that June morning. Yet they were with Wellington! They could remember the long day's fight, the holding back of the reserves, the final charge, the shout of victory. Had they not heard it told and repeated it themselves a thousand times? Their lives, utterly sordid and insignificant perhaps, except for that one priceless memory, found their meaning on the field of Waterloo. Abraham Lincoln, the details of whose earlier years have been so carefully studied of late, was cared for, advised, helped, opposed, and ridiculed throughout his eventful career by persons whose lives are now historically significant solely because they touched his. Many of them were able only after he was gone to see the meaning of what they did as instruments in the hands of Providence for shaping his massive character.

Like these men, each one of us is putting his life, with its hopes and its fears, its longings and its doubts, into the special work of to-day. We cannot realize the outcome of it all. But at least we are not losing ourselves in our work if we are doing it faithfully. Rather, we are contributing, by means of it, to the betterment of all the lives we touch. The true end of our being is not the sowing and the reaping, the making and the using of material things, for the purpose of feeding and clothing and housing the teeming millions of earth. It is, by means of these activities, to work out a destiny, to build a spiritual commonwealth, to leave an intellectual and moral heritage to the future. These greater things do not wait for our consent before they can be accomplished. When we seem to be working out only our personal salvation, or are lowering our manhood before some secret tempta-

tion, even then God may be using us for his larger ends. But he is always waiting for us to see that we are not our own. Then he will make us willing fellow-workers with himself.

We know that there have been a few rare souls, scattered over the centuries, who have clearly seen life in its divine relations, and so have consciously lifted the world nearer to their ideals. Like John the Baptist, these have been the forerunners of the kingdom that is to come; and perhaps there are more of them abroad in the world to-day than we are apt to think. The type of them all, and our highest example of sublime self-consecration, is the young prophet of Nazareth, riding into Jerusalem upon an ass's colt. The people are crying, "Hosanna to the son of David!" His followers expect to see him crowned Messiah. But long ago there has come to him in solitude the vision of the crown of thorns. He knows the power and the malignity of his enemies. He has long since counted upon yielding up his life, if need be, rather than forsake the truth. A few days later, after an ineffectual appeal to his people, he does yield it up; and his victory sets a seal upon all other self-forgetful service of the highest. We have known nothing more divine upon the earth than that pure sacrifice. It ought to touch our lives to finer issues. Its light, thrown back upon the lives of wayfarer and peasant and soldier and statesman, brings out the divine in them all. They were not their own, nor was he his own, nor are we our own. For all are God's.

I wish that this single message might be pressed home to-day upon all who are living lives that lack enthusiasm, that lack hope, that lack faith. I wish that they could be aroused to a full sense of their opportunity. I wish that some ringing voice could come preaching to them the great crusade of service.

If you are one such, have you never aspired to know

and to fulfil your life's whole meaning? Here about you lies the world-wide field of human effort and suffering. Upon it the battles that shall thrill the future will be lost and won. Upon it the great heroes and leaders of men will from time to time appear. Hearts will beat high with noble hopes. Comedies and tragedies will draw forth mingled smiles and tears. Poems will be enacted, and pictures lived. Great movements will arise, and have their day of strife and success or failure. Existence is not drained of its charm. Its fountains are not drying up. Its interest is not slackening. Its chief concern is not the languid criticism of the life that is past. The real thing that concerns you and me is life here and now, as it goes rushing and whirling by us. Let us throw ourselves into that, and try to buffet its currents for the strengthening of our souls!

There is no quicker solvent for the feeling that life is dull and purposeless than to begin resolutely some worthy task. Too often our mood is like that of the "craven" in one of Edward Rowland Sill's poems, who

> "... hung along the battle's edge,
> And thought, 'Had I a sword of keener steel,—
> That blue blade that the king's son bears,—but this
> Blunt thing!'—he snapt and flung it from his hand,
> And, lowering, crept away and left the field.
> Then came the king's son, wounded, sore bestead,
> And weaponless, and saw the broken sword,
> Hilt-buried in the dry and trodden sand,
> And ran and snatched it, and with battle-shout
> Lifted afresh he hewed his enemy down,
> And saved a great cause that heroic day."

This princely spirit, that does not quarrel with its weapons, but lays hold upon those that are at hand, is the one we need. If life is ever to open to us its rich satisfactions, we must undertake first some service that may even now be waiting at our very doors. We are in

great danger of missing the real significance of our lives because we look too far away for it.

"Around us ever lies the enchanted land."

All that the painters have depicted and the poets sung lies wide open to our sight. It is our own defect if, having eyes, we see not. To find our days full of meaning, it is only necessary that we shall make them full by living each as nobly and unselfishly as we can.

Do you not know of some man or woman who is tied to a self-appointed task, from which he might easily be freed but for the knowledge that by means of it he is sustaining some one dear to him? The world is full of such devotedness. It is bitterly hard, often, to go on steadily sacrificing the freedom and leisure that others enjoy. But life is not all for play. It is not mainly for pleasure. Its real worth lies open only to those who forsake these surface aims, and let their hearts beat with a sterner joy. This life, for which we make such careful preparations and cherish such high hopes, which is the costliest product that the age-long upward trend of human effort has yet to show, can be laid down in a moment for a righteous cause, and mankind will applaud the sacrifice. Or, better, it can be lived for God, in the pursuit of ends that he sanctions and in the service of causes that we know belong to his slow-coming kingdom.

By yielding ourselves to God's purposes, so far as we can discern them, we are to find the course to take, not asking what the end may be. The raindrop falling upon the whirling stream becomes part of its onward sweep to the ocean. So we, by giving ourselves to some high service, shall find the true goal of our lives. We shall not lose our identity, as the drop does. The outward world changes form so rapidly because much of it is continually perishing in order that the rest may be ever

renewed. Amid this ceaseless change the power of human personality is what endures. The individual dies, but his words and his acts live on. He perpetuates himself in the influence he has gained over other men. He moulds the future.

Is not this worth striving for according to the measure of our strength ? Ought we not consciously to recognize the divine forces that have made us what we are ? And do we not owe it to these, as well as to ourselves, to be henceforth the best and the most inspired men and women we can be ? Then let us accept life anew, as filled with a divine meaning. It is life in God's world. It is life with God. And let us strive to make his will and his purposes, as these come to be made clear to us, our own. This is the only salvation. It is the only way to life eternal.

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Fourth Series.] [No. 125.

BRINGING IMMORTALITY TO LIGHT.

BY

REV. CHARLES E. ST. JOHN.

AMERICAN UNITARIAN ASSOCIATION,

BOSTON.

Our Faith.

The Fatherhood of God.
The Brotherhood of Man.
The Leadership of Jesus.
Salvation by Character.
The Progress of Mankind,
onward and upward forever.

Typical Covenant of a Unitarian Church.

In the love of the truth, and the spirit of Jesus Christ, we unite for the worship of God and the service of man.

Our Declaration

(*As expressed in the By-Laws of the American Unitarian Association.*)

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(*As expressed by the National Conference of Unitarian and Other Christian Churches, at Saratoga, N. Y., in 1894.*)

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BRINGING IMMORTALITY TO LIGHT.

"God hath not given us the spirit of fear; but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind."—2 Timothy i. 7.

The day has come in our Unitarian Church when it is permitted us to rise to a height of belief in the life eternal which has never, in some particulars, been equalled in the times that are past. Too often we have heard our preachers and our people speaking of the life of the immortal soul as a "hope." Now, the word "hope" is not large enough, is not sure enough. Upon this subject there must be a conviction as great and strong, as direct and simple, as any other religious conviction which it is given us to hold. For one, I *never* use the word "hope" as I look forward towards the immortal life of my soul. So sure am I that my soul is an immortal being that I always speak of eternal life with conviction. It is one of the things that I know, if the human soul can know anything at all about itself, — about that which is spirit as surpassing that which is merely material.

I conceive that any Church — whatsoever its spirit, whatsoever its freedom, whatsoever its body of doctrine — that does not find itself competent to teach each and every soul to see the splendid vision of the life eternal, is a Church that is doomed to fade out of the respect of humanity. I see, as I watch the work of the Churches of our land, that *every* Church where this great conviction

is not strongly preached, is a Church from which the tide of human souls is out and not in; a Church which is seldom thronged by the souls that are eagerly seeking to learn of the things that are enduring.

It is, indeed, true that many human souls succeed in living very well without the inspiration of the vision of their personal immortality; but I dare to affirm that there is not one of them that could not live better than he is living. There is no man who could not live better than he has yet done; and any man who has reached a high moral stature without the aid of a belief in his immortality would, if he could have that great conviction, go on to do things of which he has not dreamed, and reach a moral stature which his friends have hardly dared to hope for him. This faith is a power for every life, and without it no man can make the most of his life on this earth. The people know this thing, and they will desert the Churches that are merely free; they will go back to the Churches that are burdened with the superstitions of the past, if it be only there that they can find the spirit that believes in the immortality of the soul. If we cannot impart that belief, I say again, our Churches are doomed to extinction. And indeed, under God, they will each and all deserve to be blotted out if they cannot make this splendid vision brighter, stronger, more convincing than any body in Christendom has ever succeeded in doing in the past.

Let us, incidentally, brush aside one or two defective conceptions of immortality with which struggling souls that have not been able to rise to the great and comprehensive vision are wont to try to satisfy themselves.

One is that of the conception of "The Choir Invisible," wherein we are urged to find our immortality in the influences we leave behind when we are dead and gone. That is beautiful so far as it goes; it is a wonderful

thought that every deed that we do leaves its record behind it, to stay here so long as men live on the surface of the earth. But suppose you do a good deed to-day, the results of which are to last only so long as the human race may chance to last on earth, and then you die. Then what of the deeds that you might have done had you lived a week, a year, longer? What of the influences you might have started if you had stayed here many years, ever working with a greater courage, with a deeper zeal, with a more ample knowledge? The thought of all that we might do if we lived on, of the things we might do and the influences that we might start if we lived forevermore, demonstrates to me the pitiful inadequacy of any conception of immortality which simply consists of the influences which we can start during fifty or ninety years.

There is another defective conception of immortality, whereby despairing souls in their weakest moments look forward, thinking that peace will come to them when at last their souls are absorbed into the vast being of God, each one to lose his own personality that the eternal whole may prevail. Now, if ever the many souls of men be absorbed into the being of God, it cannot increase the power of the infinite God; while, on the other hand, if even one soul be so absorbed, it will rob the world of God of all the strength, the moral energy, the spiritual motives that can exist in one independent living soul. I conceive that every soul is by the creative act of God set over against God, forevermore to be a power that can volunteer to work for God and with God, or that can, if it will, rebel against God. I conceive of every mortal as such a power that it would be an inconceivable waste if one single soul were ever absorbed into the Almighty, the world being thereby robbed of the goodness, the righteousness, the moral power that could be independ-

ently exercised by that soul forevermore. Put aside that defective conception, then.

And think, if you will, of a human soul starting at some definite point — we know not how or when. Evolutionists to the full though we are, we know not how the human soul differs from the mental and physical ancestry that lies behind it in the creative work of God; we know not how it is, or when it is, that God makes a soul to be an individual different from all things that have been before or that are to be thereafter. We know little of the soul's beginning, but we can know the soul and its life. So, starting at one point, given one infancy, one progress through this life of earth, and one eternal advancement on into the conditions of life which as yet are mysterious to us; the soul is a power forever knowing its past, and forever conscious of every victory that it has won in the days that are gone. And the life towards which we go on into what we call the "unknown" must be always a life of consciousness, always a life wherein he that is living it knows himself to be the individual he has always been, though ripened and broadened. We shall always have a present that rests logically upon a known past, and always have the joy that arises from the endeavor so to live, so to shape our present, that our future may be bright. Such, most briefly stated, is my conception of an immortal soul.

Now, people come to me, as they come to every minister, to every person who says he believes in immortality — they come to me and ask, "How can you prove these things? Prove to me that my soul is immortal! I long to believe it." It cannot be proved. The Christian Church throughout all these centuries has wasted half its energies in the vain effort to prove that the soul is immortal. It is much that the pages of our wonderful Bible are thrilling with this splendid conviction; it is a

great thing that our leader, Jesus, made it the centre of his teaching; it is a great thing that the bravest souls of all times have in some fashion believed in this thing, and seen the vision of their personal immortality. But none of this proves it. In the face of all this great belief of all the ages in the personal immortality of the soul, one may refuse to believe it. Therefore, let us take the stand now that we see that it cannot be proved, and that it will not do to apply to the things of the spirit the kind of proofs that apply to the physical universe. Happily, however, we have something better than such proof, for day by day it is given to you and me to *demonstrate* the immortality of the spirit.

Eternal life is not a thing of another world; not a thing to be had simply after we are dead; as if we could know nothing about God and the life with him until we passed out of one world into another, or had that other world supernaturally revealed to us. There is only one world, the great world that is ruled by God, the world of the spirit; and we are in that world now, living now by the laws that will control us forevermore, if we so determine, guided now by the presence of the Lord our God, if so be we can understand that leading. Eternal life is a present reality, a thing to be had here upon the earth, as Jesus said, "more and more abundantly." It was his aim to give people life "more and more abundantly," not life simply after they are said to be dead. Why, when a man comes to me asking me to prove to him the immortality of his soul, if he asks it earnestly and manfully, I can see the immortality of his soul shining out of his eyes and trembling upon his lips, just by virtue of the moral, spiritual earnestness that is in him.

Not argument, then, but love between man and man, and the daily putting forth of righteousness and spiritual power, shows to us the reality of the eternal life. Why,

the world is crowded full of the messengers of God that are demonstrating the superiority of the soul over the body and all its concerns. Every mother who is content to forego the things that she would like to be doing, content to give up her personal inclinations, her reading and her social life, for the sake of being absolutely faithful to the little lives that are given to her keeping, makes to all those that have hearts to understand the hourly demonstration of the reality of the life eternal. She is living the life eternal as she hovers over her children, and gives her soul and life up in utmost daily faithfulness. Every brave nurse who is content to risk her life in the service of people that are suffering from dreadful contagious disease, is making again the high demonstration of the greatness of the spirit, as contrasted with the utter feebleness and inadequacy of all the concerns of the body. Every soldier whose motives in going forth to war are love of country and desire to do duty well at any risk; every soldier who turns his back upon the things that you and I find most precious, upon home and all its associations, upon work and all its gains, turns his back upon those things for the sake of going forth to endure hardship and to face danger just for that vague idea we call "honor," is showing us again the eternal life of the human soul, whatsoever may be the moral deficiencies of his present life. Every sufferer, since time began, who has been content to suffer and make no whining about it; every soul that has been willing to join the great army who, under Christ, make the demonstration of the power of self-sacrifice, the power that comes from clinging to an ideal at any possible cost to self — all those are demonstrating the greatness of the human soul, the certainty of everlasting life. They are not proving it; they have it. We see it in them, and it is not a thing needing to be proved. Who will offer to prove to me the

love of my dearest friend? It is an insult to me to offer to prove that thing to me, for I live in that thing daily, — I know it and rest upon it as I rest upon the power of God.

Not things to be proved, these things of the spirit; simply things to be understood as we stand hushed or inspired in their consecrating presence!

Is not this simply the Christ method of demonstrating the great things of the spirit? We do not find him arguing to prove to men that they are immortal souls; we simply find him appealing to them because they are immortal souls. It is the right method still, and sad it is that the Christian Church through all these centuries has missed the prophetic tone and the fine fellowship with the Christ method in proclaiming these great things, which are more distinctly true than anything with which the man of science, as such, has to deal.

Watch the course of any mortal through this earth, — some carpenter, if you will, — and see how hour by hour he uses the things of this mortal world to carry out the things of immortality. He takes a tool and uses it, month by month, till it is worn out, and when it is worn out he throws it aside and takes another, not hesitating to make the change. Constantly he goes on, taking better and better implements as the process of invention brings them to him, until he is able at last, as his mind deepens and broadens, to throw aside his tools altogether and work with his brain in supervising the toil of many men. And at last there comes a day in the process of time when he cannot use his body as of old. Its muscles begin to play him false, its nerves begin to quiver, until the body itself is worn out and thrown aside just like all the other tools. For our body is nothing but a tool, a tool which we can do more with than with any other which we have, but yet a tool which sometimes hinders rather than aids our endeavor. How often we have had thoughts of

the spirit which we have been unable to express, so weak and frail this body of ours has been in response to the earnest impulses of our spirit to drive the body forth to do great things and utter great thoughts and reveal the great things of God! The body fails us at last, — it fails us when we are at our highest; and so in good time, by the grace of God, we cast aside this last great tool, and go right on, conscious of ourselves still, determined still to do the things of the spirit, determined to find some better tool, the nature of which we cannot dream of now, whereby we shall at last adequately express ourselves, adequately do the work of the Lord our God!

You wish to do the best things that you can for your brethren, to give them the most wonderful blessings that you can; now can you see that this vision of the life eternal is absolutely the best gift that can come to any person, whatsoever the conditions of his life? It is well and necessary to give better houses to the people; it is well to relieve them from the burdens of poverty; it is a good thing to try to establish better social conditions in the world. But let the Christian Church understand that it is commissioned to do something that is deeper and more far-reaching than any of these most gracious efforts. It is the duty of the Church to give to every man the knowledge that he is an immortal soul!

Now see what comes to a man when you convince him that he is an immortal being.

In the first place, you give to him the glorious vision of his own assured success. I believe that every soul that is born is commissioned of God to succeed, yet how few, how very few, there are who do succeed in any way commensurate with their hopes! How many there are who seem to be doing nothing but piling up failure — failure after failure, broken ambition after baffled hope, loss after loss! This is the life of many people, if this earth holds

all the life that they have. And all these people have no feeling of success; they go to their graves discouraged, feeling that the world has no use for them. But show every one of those souls, even as he totters to the grave in old age, that immortal life is before him, and then he sees that time is given him in which to succeed, time to retrieve the errors of the past, time in which to bring together all the lessons which he has learned in the past, and on that foundation to build his happiness.

Another thing which you give to every man just so soon as you convince him that he is immortal, is a fine conception of the present worth of life. Whosoever understands that he cannot die, feels that it is worth while to be born, no matter where he is born; no matter what the hardship, the grinding poverty, the disgrace, the shame of year upon year of earth, no matter about it at all — it is worth while to live, because living gives one, in some fashion or other, a beginning of life that is never to end, a life that is commissioned of God to build up righteousness and truth out of the most sordid and crushed beginning.

Another thing you give to every man when you give him this great vision, is victory over his temptations. If we think that we are going to pass out of existence at the end of eighty years, we may yield ourselves to certain ways which would be innocent under such conditions. The animal has no complaint with himself or his past; and if we are only a glorified sort of an animal, we need not hesitate to yield our thoughts year after year to things the only merit of which is that they do not do wrong to other people, do not violate the present laws of the land. But if I know that I am an immortal being, from that moment on I face these temptations, and say: "Shall I, an immortal being, do anything that I shall not be glad to think of forever and forevermore?" And the answer is instant: "Why, no; as an immortal being I live here on

the surface of the earth, here in the present stage of my progress, in such fashion that I can conceive of erecting upon the things that I am doing now a life which shall stand in glory forever and forever."

Another thing you give to every man with this great conviction, and that is, glorious moral fearlessness. The true Christian has no cause to fear anything; yet see how many things there are that the multitudes of our comrades are afraid of! How many things there are in your own lives that you fear! How easy it is for us to fear the pain that may befall the body! How instinctive, almost, it seems to be to fear the dark, to fear the storm of thunder and lightning, to fear everything that is unknown, and to be afraid of death! Now in all these things the child of God who knows himself to be the child of God, and knows himself to be an eternal child of God, is made fearless; he is placed above the range of these things of terror, and enabled to understand the divine power it gives to live in the recognition of immortality.

If we could conceive of some imaginary Judgment Day away off in the future after we have laid aside this body, this tool which is ours, and have come forth to a bar of judgment, there to hear the solemn question, "What have you done back there to make your title clear to mansions in the skies?" there would be only one way wherein the true Christian could face that bar of judgment, only one answer which he should make. He should make it in the spirit of that poem of Rudyard Kipling's, where is pictured such a scene, with the faithful standing there before God, "Gentlemen Unafraid." The answer to make to any such question, inconceivable as it is, is this: "I have not been trying to win mansions in the skies; I have not been striving for rewards back there in the life of earth, in that portion of my life which is called mortality. Back there I have been living the life eternal.

I have been obeying, as best I could, the ideals that have come from God into the mental grasp that I had there in the life of the body. I still am living the life eternal as I answer to your question, and I propose to go on forevermore living the life eternal. Away with your judgment! I know that it comes not from God. My God, my Heavenly Father, from my infancy up has been surrounding me with love, with inspiration, and with opportunity. Never has he placed before me any such question as this; never has he laid before me anything which was a barrier, a possible eternal check in my everlasting advancement, never. And I know — such is my conception of the love of God — I know that he never will. Away with your judgment!"

There is a spirited story told of King Richard the Lion-hearted, how on a certain occasion, when he had but a little band of followers around him and was entrusted with the safe-keeping of a most precious relic, he was beset by a horde of enemies vastly outnumbering his own little band. And the story goes that he seized the precious relic and hurled it far out into the ranks of his opposing foe, and then, drawing his sword and summoning his followers to duty, the heroic king rushed forward, hewing his way to the treasure that he had thrown forward into the utmost danger, and so winning back the thing that he had to protect and defeating his enemies at the same time. Now, comrades, I have treasures out there in that which we call the life beyond the grave, — souls that have gone out from my own home to be there in the clearer presence of God. And day by day I press onward toward those that are my own. Day by day I endeavor to live so that I shall not be unworthy of their broader and brighter knowledge. Day by day I endeavor to live so that I shall perhaps be able to add to what I can do for the world a little of what they might have done

had they stayed here longer. And I dare affirm — so absolute is my confidence in the love of God — I dare affirm that never can there come anything into my way which can check my onward march as I go forward to join my own; never a cloud, a temptation, or a barrier, never an obstacle that I cannot sweep aside in my march as an immortal being.

That is the only way to face the future. It carries with it victory over all conditions; it carries with it eager submission to the punishments that may be necessary in the education we receive from God; it carries with it a volunteering spirit for the works that may come under the commands of God. All that we need to have is the knowledge, the conviction, the positive assurance that we are bound on an eternal journey, and that we shall go forward forevermore, whatever the difficulties that may appear.

See what you give a man, then, when you convince him that he is an immortal being. You give him the vision of his own success; you give him a fine conception of the present value of life; you give him victory over his temptations; and you give him moral fearlessness.

Now, there is not another Church in our land which is free in the same way that our Church is free to present this great conviction, this strong foundation of happiness and peace, with absolute reasonableness, basing it upon nothing but an appeal to the understanding of the individual soul; not another Church that can do it. And it cannot be done in the generation that is to come unless it be done in this way.

It is not to be assumed that the Churches which are now called liberal will be the only ones to enter upon this noble service. Doubtless many another Church will shake itself free from the trammels of the past by its consecrated earnestness in the service of mankind. Be that as it

may, it certainly ought not to be the case that the Church which is already free should be other than the first to spring to meet this opportunity. The Churches that have believed that human souls were in danger of losing life eternal have been incited for centuries by most noble earnestness in their endeavor to bring souls into the fellowship of Christ, into the kingdom of God. They have accomplished great things by their earnest service. Shall we, who hold another conception of the relation between the soul and God, a conception which we believe to be nearer the truth, — shall we be any less earnest in our endeavor to reveal immortality to many? I cannot believe that we shall. I cannot believe that our Unitarian Church will fail to move forward in a spirit of Christlike devotion in order that it may have the privilege of revealing to countless men and women how beautiful a thing it is to be alive when one lives in the spirit of courage, of power, and of love. We need not waste time in comparing our point of view with that of our brethren in other Churches; but, on the other hand, we ought not, because of our tolerance, to deprive ourselves of the great joy of vigorous service for mankind by means of the religious conceptions that are most dear to ourselves. In the way that is given to us we are endeavoring to bring immortality to light; and by the earnestness and devotion in which we serve this cause the measure of our success will be determined. If we are strong, daring, and self-sacrificing, we shall accomplish wondrous things. If we are lukewarm, we shall accomplish nothing.

THE American Unitarian Association is the working missionary organization of the Unitarian churches of America. It seeks to promote sympathy and united action among Liberal Christians, and to spread the principles which are believed by Unitarians to be essential to civil and religious liberty and progress and to the attainments of the spiritual life. To this end it supports missionaries, establishes and maintains churches, holds conventions, aids in building meeting-houses, publishes, sells, and gives away books, sermons, tracts, hymn-books, and devotional works.

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FOURTH SERIES.] [No. 126.

THE THIRST

FOR

THE LIVING GOD.

BY

REV. FRANCIS G. PEABODY, D.D.

AMERICAN UNITARIAN ASSOCIATION,
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THE THIRST FOR THE LIVING GOD.

"My soul thirsteth for God, for the living God." — PSALMS, xlii, 2.

I WISH to speak to you of the signs of the times in which we live; but it seems as if I must be mistaken in my text. Certainly the distinctive mark of our generation does not at once appear to be its thirst for a living God. At the first glance, indeed, no text could seem less applicable. The conspicuous activities and occupations of the time are so far removed from any such devout desire, the thirst of the time is so insatiable for its new resources of knowledge, luxury and power, that such a text, chosen to represent the spirit of the age, may well seem absurdly misapplied. It is much easier to talk — as so many do talk — of the age as without any living God, a worldly, indifferent, scientific, materialistic, godless time. Thirst enough there seems to be — a thirst which is almost feverish — for the possessions, ambitions, and indulgences of the time, but where, we may lightly ask, is the thirst for God? Yet when the deeper impulses of the age are more carefully scrutinized, and as its larger tendencies disclose themselves, this first impression is not likely to last. The fact is that there seems to be one kind of living and thinking on the surface of the age, and quite another kind, moving quite another way, within its depths. The one is like the eddies which diversify a stream; the

other is the current which underlies them; and it is as though we were watching such a stream, whose eddies are so turbulent and refluent that its true course seems reversed. Quietly and silently the deeper current of the time sweeps on, yet it makes itself felt at last. When in some later age a philosophic historian looks back upon the characteristics of our time, he is not likely to be so misled by its superficial character as to call it an indifferent or a godless time. He will be judging then not by the eddies, but by the underlying current, and he will observe there a sweep of tendency very different from that which at first forces itself upon our view. Beneath all the bewildering activities and splendid acquisitions of our day, he will, I feel sure, observe an ever-increasing and profound sense of dissatisfaction with these results. He will see that these very interests which seemed so absorbing opened of their own accord into larger interests and deeper problems. Looking back thus upon us, such a student will certainly not be able to say that this was an age of conviction or of faith, but he can hardly help speaking of it as a *thirsty* time, a generation in which, after the briefest possible self-glorifying and sense of gain, there has come over thoughtful minds a great dissatisfaction, as though all that was known would be worse than vanity unless it opened out into the assurance of something more.

Thus the text which I have chosen may be untrue to the superficial living which prevails in this as in every age, but I believe it strikes with increasing clearness the note of the heart of the time. There is scarcely a phase of philosophy about us, or a really profound experience which we observe, which does not illustrate the increasing thirst of the human soul for the living God. Beneath the harsh noises of our day there is this permanent undertone, continuing like the sounds of nature

which we hear only as other noises are stilled. Amid this apparent satiety and self-sufficiency of the age, there appears this divine restlessness. Each gain in things which appear to make a living God superfluous seems to compel men to some new aspect of religion, or to some new substitute for faith. A thirsty time; — not a time when the soul is satisfied, but when it is growing parched even to torture, and is demanding that its thirst be somehow slaked, — a time when souls and systems are coming, as the Psalmist says that the deer comes in summer, to springs that once ran free, and are finding there nothing but dry, hot stones, and then, panting for the water brooks, are turning from these barren resources of the past and thirsting for the signs of a present and living God, — such is the scene which the age, in its deeper living and thinking, seems to present, and which contradicts and corrects our first impression of the times. It is this underlying and fundamental character which I wish now very imperfectly to trace. Let us see this deeper desire uttering itself, first, in the thought of the time, and then in its life, and then let us ask ourselves what we can do to meet and satisfy this profound and spiritual thirst.

Take, in the first place, the philosophy of the time, and consider the outcome of those forms of philosophy which, to the religious mind, are most unpromising and repelling. For the last twenty years philosophical unbelief has been taking shape among English-speaking people under two types. One we call positivism, the other agnosticism. Now, whatever these two types of thought had to debate about they seemed to have this one point of agreement — that each of them expressly withheld the thoughts of men from any sense of a living God. Yet, strangely enough, nothing which the history of the times presents seems to illustrate so strongly as do these very schools of thought the increasing thirst of philoso-

phy for a genuine religious life. It may be said that they do not give this satisfying conviction, but it cannot be said, in the light of their last expressions, that they do not thirst for it. Each of them, having run its brief course of reaction and of denial, has already set itself to the renewal — nay, to the deepening — of the religious emotions which it seemed to ignore. We are even brought, in the most striking way, to a time of collision and controversy between the two, each of them maintaining, with no slight heat, that in it alone lie the elements of true religion and the satisfaction of this human thirst. On the one hand is the theologian of the unknowable, and on the other hand the devotee of the unworshipable, each bent upon emphasizing the very elements in the conception of a living God which the other is forced to omit. One is inspired by the mystery of the universe: the other by the dignity of human life. One sees behind the play of nature's forces that unknown force "from which all things proceed;" to the other, religion is religion only as it is addressed to that which can be known and loved.

Thus, from one point of view, each deliverance is as negative as it can well be. The one may be justly called the "ghost of a religion;" the other cannot be called even that ghost which shows that a reality has been some time there. Yet, from another and profounder point of view, each is contributing an essential part to the thought of a living God. The one offers the element of power; the other that of love. Each is expressing to the utmost which the system permits, this demand of life for the permanently real. Each feels the necessity of satisfying this restlessness of the age for that which it can revere. Each recognizes that in this satisfaction lies the test of the system and the largest problem of its thought. What does all this mean, but so much testimony from the most unprejudiced witnesses that the intellectual thirst of

the age is for something which can be called a living God?

Or take, once more, what seems to me one of the most curious and instructive phases of philosophy among us, — that which calls itself the "ethical movement." Here is, at first sight, another attempt of a far more practical and sympathetic kind to withdraw the attention of the time from all that is not tangible and human to the immediate problems and tragedies of human needs. Not a living God, but a living and improved human society, is what it thirsts to see. Not a distant heaven, it says, but a present earth, is the true scene of regeneration. Not worship, but work, is the true offering. I need not say what a reproach is offered to the work of the Christian Church when in the midst of its activities it could occur even to a few people that any such ethical enterprise needed undertaking. It is the practical confession that the people whose business it is to do the work are not doing it. Surely one ought to be able to turn on any society for ethical culture and say — as a distinguished layman once said when asked to join a society for the prevention of pauperism — "I belong to one such society already; the Christian Church." But the ethical movement has a deeper lesson than this to teach. It goes its way of reaction and self-exclusion as though its principles naturally separated it from the worshipping world, but when it comes to give account of these principles, its dynamic is no other than that which has always inspired moral sacrifices and found beauty in duty-doing. The ethical aim fulfils itself and it opens into ideals which are manifestly religious. When a man frankly commits himself to principles of idealism, when he is able to say that he keeps the sense of union "with that universal life to whose influence we have opened the channels of our being," when he "feels constrained to interpret the uni-

verse in terms of goodness," then I should not feel satisfied to classify such a man as a "suppressed Theist," for his Theism appears to me confessed and undisguised. It may be in vain to say here, as it was in vain to say of Mr. Spencer or of Mr. Harrison, that permanent peace is discovered for religious faith, but surely there is nothing testified to by the ethical movement if it be not an increasing tendency to recognize the religious aspect of conduct and to satisfy the thirst of the time for a living God.

Only two generations ago the great philosopher Fichte passed through much the same transition in his thought which this ethical movement is now exhibiting, and I have always found the history of his mind among the most instructive incidents which any student can examine. In his first phase of development the moral order of the world was to him enough to believe. Kant's Imperative controlled his thought. Ethical passion filled his writing. "This moral order," he cried, "is God and we need no other." But soon his teaching assumes a wholly different tone. Ethical culture, instead of satisfying the life of the soul, now demonstrates to him that the life of the soul is undeveloped. Truly to live, one's life must be merged in the Universal life which is the great reality. So long as one would be anything of himself, his true life has not begun. Thus, in his first phase, the one abiding reality was the moral personality of the individual; in his second phase the one abiding reality was that central life of which the individual was but the reflection. This transition in Fichte's thought has usually been described as a revolution. It has been supposed that there lay an unbridged chasm between his earlier and his later works; and that he frankly accepted this self-contradiction. It was not until one of our own Unitarian scholars examined the work of Fichte that the unity throughout the whole was observed. Fichte himself announced in

his later writings that this unity existed in his mind. It was not self-contradiction, it was only enlargement of view, which led him from the ethical to the religious position. The one when completely analyzed was seen to rest upon the other. The only sufficient foundation for moral culture was in confidence toward the universe. The only adequate impulse for self-development was the spirit of self-surrender. He who would save his life must lose it, and he who was ready to lose it, the same would find it. I find in this incident of history, as in the ethical movement which it prefigures, solemn lessons both for the moralists and for the Churches. On the one hand, let not those in whom moral purposes are thus compelling imagine that they have a conflict with the methods of religion. The only way in which such a conflict can be prolonged must be through lack of philosophy and ignorance of history. Given a pure impulse to self-sacrifice for the good of men, and with it any degree of power in philosophical analysis, and sooner or later the ethical intention will discover that its motive power and permanent inspiration are nothing less than the thirst for a manifestation of the living God. And, on the other hand, let not the Churches suppose that, in lessening their emphasis on worship, in absorbing themselves in what men call practical usefulness, and shaping themselves into ethical-culture clubs, they are likely to satisfy more completely the life of the time. The dynamic of Church work remains what it has always been, — the sense of the *divine reality*. Let the Churches take to themselves the full reproach of the ethical movement, and apply themselves to a better philanthropy, but let them take this other lesson of the same movement, — its confession that the sources of the moral force are intangible and ideal. It would be a sad day for any religious body if in its desire to be as ethical as the ethicists, it should depreciate the moral lift of religious inspiration.

It would be trying to pluck the fruits of life without fostering the roots of life. Here is the ethical movement, lifting its ethics into faith. Let it not meet any of us trying to turn our religion into terms of ethics. People may meet each other thus, standing as it were on the same step of opinion, but it makes a vast difference whether one is on his way up or on his way down.

I have dwelt too long upon these intellectual illustrations of the thirst of the time, — a thirst which will not be satisfied until philosophy has found a living God. For, after all, this ferment of the philosophies is but a suggestion of the spiritual restlessness which possesses multitudes about us, whether they study philosophy or not. What are the facts? All over this country there are thousands of thoughtful lives, trained in modern ways of thinking, beyond the reach of ecclesiasticism or of orthodoxy, yet with this great thirst upon their souls, panting, like the hart for the water brooks, for some assurance of a living God. These are the souls which test the force and the sympathy of a church or a minister. They do not demand a complicated or elaborate faith, but they thirst for faith in something. They yield themselves, in the lack of something better, to the most extravagant substitutes for faith. Anything, if it be nothing more religious than tipping tables or "astral bodies," is precious to them if it seems to suggest supernatural control. Their doubts and problems are not concerned with the details of belief; it is the very foundation which is undermined. A few years ago a young man came to me with his religious questionings. I never can forget his fierce and passionate attack. "Do not suppose," he said, "that I am not a good Baptist. I am a member of the Church. I am 'sound on immersion.' But tell me, tell me if you can, whether or no there is any *living God*." I do not need to delay in describing such experiences as this. It is this eager, receptive, waiting mood,

found in every community, which gives the chief human impulse to the life of a modern minister. It fills the preacher's work with a new exhilaration, for he is not dealing with a controversy against other forms of faith, but with a positively constructive work. It does not much matter for this end precisely wherein the confidence of his faith may lie. Let him believe *anything* concerning the ways of God supremely and announce his faith rationally and he is satisfying the thirst of many souls. Here is a time when many critics are observing the decline of religious influence and the decrease of Church attendance. It seems to me a time much more marked for the wonderful eagerness with which people still turn to the ministry of any man who speaks as if his religion were real. It is one more mark of the weary waiting and the divine discontent which marks the time, and which draws it, like the hart to the water brooks, toward any voice or Church or substitute for Church which seems likely to supply its thirst.

Such, then, it seems to me, is the deeper meaning of the signs of the times. And if, beneath its varied conflicts, there is this one demand of philosophy and life, then certainly it is time to ask some questions concerning the way in which this want is to be supplied. In the first place, then, I ask: "What is the kind of Church which is needed at such a time?" We talk of shaping the Church to suit the time! Well, what is the Church that suits the time? If we were to judge by the superficial look of the age we should be likely to say that the times demand a sensational, spectacular, secularized Church. This is precisely what many persons plead in thus perverting their Churches — that the times compel them to put lectures in the place of prayers and kitchens in the place of altars. But those who so judge are not really interpreting the time in those deeper movements which it is the very function of a Church to represent. The real demand of the

times, forcing itself upon us with a peculiar emphasis, is for Churches where the sense of God shall be living and real. There are many other things that may please, attract, and seem to satisfy, but the fundamental thirst which is created by the thought and the life of the times, is for this and nothing less. It is possible to be a preacher and to preach, not a living, but a dead God. It is possible to be a preacher and to preach on living themes, but not to preach on God at all. It is not for either of these ministrations that the world is really waiting. Each of them does its share in driving thirsty souls away from the Churches. When does a man preach a dead God? It is when his faith is retrospective, when the signs of divine control are clearer in the distant past than they are to-day, when the tendencies of the time seem to him all wrong, and the collapse of faith is imminent. This is the pessimism of religion. This is the atheism of theology. And yet this man is not preaching a dead God any more than he who has a brand-new, unhistorical faith to deliver, as though God had been waiting till now to be discovered, and the only method of revelation were a method of to-day. The preacher of the living God must have the historic sense. He must come not to destroy but to fulfil. It must be one law and one love which he discerns, binding the past with the present in the comprehensive unfolding of an Infinite design. "It is the law of human life," says Ruskin in a prophetic passage, "that we shall not build in the air, but in the already high-storied temple of the thoughts of our ancestors. The stronger of us may bring for increase of height some small white stone and on the stone a new name written, which is indeed done by those ordered to such masonry, nor ever in any great degree except by persons trained reverently in some large portion of the wisdom of the past."

So, on the other hand, with the preaching of themes which are living but are not divine. I do not wonder that in reaction from a theology which seemed dead the pulpit has been tempted by any subject which seemed living. A congregation, like any other audience, must be interested before it can be taught. A Church in these days must deal with that which is practical or die. And here, on the surface of the times, there presents itself, as we began by seeing, this great demand for instruction and culture and amusements which a Church may easily mistake for the real thirst of the soul. But it is not. Philosophy has shown us that it is not. Glimpses of personal experience have shown us that it is not. The Church which addresses itself, first of all, to these concerns which seem living and practical because they are superficial, is simply missing the wonderful opportunity which the times providentially present. It is watching the eddies, not the current of the age. People may seem to want to be entertained, cultivated, and amused through the ministration of religion, but the real want of the time is for a profounder help; and wherever there meets the life of the time the simple and rational preaching of a living God, there are the great successes of the pulpit. We hear it said that preaching should not be over the heads of the people, and that one must preach *down* to reach them. I am inclined to fear far more that the pulpit may be misled into not preaching *up* to the larger and higher needs of life; or, rather, it is not a question of up or down but a question of *in*, of penetrating beneath the apparent tendencies and interests of the age to the permanent and profounder need. A time when the pressure of life crowds out from so many minds the thought of God is the last of times to which the pulpit should adjust itself. It is the very time when the preaching of a living God comes with its full effect. High themes, confident

faith, undisguised devoutness — these are the qualities which tell with double force when so many waver and retreat. People long to have the events of the time, its social troubles, its national crises, its business methods, its home experiences, and all the multitudinous incidents of life which seem to have so little in them that is divine, taken up into the ways of God, so that the light of the presence of a living God shall shine through them with its infinite prodigality and give them a meaning which they did not have before. Many a weary listener has felt this deep demand as he has waited through a sermon which dealt with what was living, but was economical of what was eternal. "Oh! for some answer," he has murmured, "to the deeper human cry; for some enlargement of the theme into the proper realm of worship." Throughout this ministration, however scientific or artistic or literary it may be, there is no complete satisfaction for that thirst which is slaked by nothing less than communion with the eternal. "My soul thirsteth for God, for the living God."

This then is the Church for the times — the Church of a living God. And now I ask once more: How is this kind of Church to be strengthened and developed? It has its two factors — its minister and its people — and for each of these I have a word to say. On the one hand, I want to speak of that which is really a subordinate matter — the minister's intellectual life. It seems to me that the times demand of the clergy just what we often hear it said, that the times have outgrown, — *a revival of theological study*. A great many people, and among them a great many preachers, think that "live preaching" has not much to do with theology and had better let it alone. Such persons are commending that which is impossible. A man who is to preach about God and about duty, has but two theological alternatives. He can choose between

bad theology and good theology; but even while he is condemning theology, he is theologizing. I know very well what can be said in scorn of theology. Theology is not religion. Libraries are not the only fountains of inspiration. "The measure of learning," as the beginner of modern theology once for all said, "is not the measure of piety." I know that if the study of theology is to remain a fit introduction to the ministry of religion, theology must have a broader definition. It must include all the evidence which leads to God. It must claim for its department the study of philanthropy as well as the study of opinions. It must include the literature of devoutness as well as the literature of dogmatics. And yet I feel sure that it is a dangerous time for the preaching of a living God, when ministers are so easily diverted from the themes of theology, thus broadly defined, as the centre of their studies. A minister stands for a specialty. His office is the maintenance of the religious life. He is to preach about God. Now it is possible that he should strengthen his own religious convictions through the literature of art or science or *belles-lettres*, but he is certainly not thus approaching most directly to his theme. He is not doing what other specialists do, or what commands the respect of other specialists. Knowing little of theology, he will easily fall into the ranks of those who think there is little to know, just as smatterers in science are the first to offer hasty judgments and easy ridicule concerning scientific affairs. Add to this the strength contributed to any mind by contact with great and comprehensive thinkers of one's own calling. Whether one is to agree or not with the great philosophers and theologians, it is from them that he will get both his intellectual grasp and his intellectual modesty. Still further, no mistake could be greater than to suppose that devotion to professional studies is what makes dull, metaphysical or essay-writing preachers.

The simple fact is that the great preachers of the Christian Church have been its great theologians. Augustine, Anselm, Bernard, Luther, Calvin, Schleiermacher, Maurice, Chalmers, Newman, Channing — these men at the same time revived the preaching of the Church and remoulded its theology. The one function did not exclude the other. On the contrary ample learning permitted simplicity of speech. It is so with every preacher. He must have a background, not of sentimentalism or poetry, or of the affairs of the day, but of well-ordered knowledge concerning the proper themes of his calling, and if he has not habitually addressed his mind to these themes, then he may sentimentalize or entertain or discuss as he will, but he will not for any length of time mislead a community into the belief that he has a right to stand before them as the interpreter of the ways of a living God. "Behold!" says many a minister, like the fishermen of Galilee, "We have toiled all night and taken nothing;" and then the answer comes, "Launch out into the *deep*, and let down your nets for a draught." It is this dabbling in the shallow places of one's professional life which ruins the career of so many fishers of men. It is for him who obeys the summons to the deeper waters of his vocation that the net immediately is filled.

I pass to higher ways than this of study through which a Church shall satisfy the thirst for a living God; — and I choose out of them all this quality alike for minister and people, — a larger loyalty to the spirit of Jesus Christ. We hear it said that a live faith will outgrow the Christian limitations, and that a mediator between the soul and God is an interruption of communion. But in reality the discipleship of Christ exists for no other thing than to make this communion uninterrupted, and there is no other way of communion so straight and clear. "Show us the *Father*," said the disciple, "and it sufficeth us;" and the

answer was: "He that hath seen me, hath seen the Father." A man, that is to say, who has lived in intimacy with Jesus Christ is not likely to look in vain for a Father in heaven. His Christian loyalty deepens and clarifies his Theism. It is in the companionship with Jesus Christ that one comes to know God best as a living God. A great many problems may remain open concerning the person and work of Jesus of Nazareth, but this at least is sure, — that he had a wonderful sense of the nearness and reality of God. When a man is looking for other truths he may perhaps go elsewhere, but when his soul is thirsting for a living God, then certainly what Jesus said is true, "The water that I shall give him shall be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life." This is the natural basis of the authority of Jesus. To come in the course of one's experience upon one towering personality to whom the sense of God is meat and drink, and in whom duty becomes grace through this illuminating of his way, to be taken out of one's solitude and feel this life touching one's own through all its experiences, yet sustained and disciplined throughout by this transfiguring faith, — that is a recognition of authority which is healthful and scientific and invigorating and humbling all at once. The more one is set free from false and external authority the more he needs the authority of a master soul. The more the problem of the time is seen to be the preaching of a living God, the more unlikely shall we be to outgrow the mediating force of Christian loyalty. Far more probably will come the cry which the American representative of Spencerian philosophy already foresees, when "the kingdoms of this world shall be the kingdoms of Christ and he shall reign, King of kings and Lord of lords."

There remains but one other way which I need mention in which a Church can meet this thirst of the time; one other weapon with which this battle of the age is to be

fought. Yet it is the weapon without which all that I have named will be in vain. Serious studies, Christian faith, — these are but contributions to the one possession which can make religion reach the souls that need it. I need not say that it is what the Apostle calls "the sword of the Spirit," the possession of a consecrated character, the eloquence of the life that is lived with God. After all, only one thing can make people sure that there is a living God and that is his effect on living souls. After all, there is but one kind of Church which can truly slake the thirst of the time, and that is a Church which develops and sustains holy lives. There is but one proof of life; it is life itself. When we see a soul manifestly sustained of God, then we are sure that God lives. Thus the secret of the power and success of any Church lies, not in the eloquence of its preacher or the elaboration of its ritual, but simply in the unconscious manifestation by each individual among its congregation of the reality of the life of God. This is the ministry which all may share and the responsibility which none can avoid. This is what makes a Church a power of salvation for souls, — that there is found in it, amid the restlessness, depressions, and perplexities of the time, the calmness of a stable faith. This, then, becomes the deepest prayer which can be offered for a Christian Church, — that even as the cry with which men come to it must be that cry with which our psalm begins, "My soul thirsteth for God, for the living God," so the word with which they depart may be the song of trust with which the psalm concludes; "Why art thou cast down, O my soul? and why art thou disquieted within me? Hope thou in God: for I shall yet praise him, who is the health of my countenance, and my God."

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BY

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THE INTERPRETATION OF LIFE.

"If any man will come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow me." — MATT. xvi. 24.

WE are immortal beings, — beings compacted of the germs of all excellence. Each human being is a power, more or less conscious of itself, tending toward the things that are absolutely right. In every soul exists the power of being honorable, faithful, patient, pure in heart; the power of loving, of making sacrifices for the sake of love and righteousness, and especially the power of independent exertion of will. The beginning of the realization of everything that has ever inspired our race lives in these immortal souls of ours. We accept to the full everything that the men of science have established, or may in the future establish, concerning the origin of our souls. We gladly recognize that we are born out of the bosom of this good old earth and its experiences. But notwithstanding all these teachings that may be given us, and reaching far beyond anything that is implied in them, there rises this magnificent perception, which is given to every one of us, that we are immortal beings, conditioned under God to work for the things of God, to take them into our souls as our own and our very self, to guide us from this day on forever more.

Each one, consciously or unconsciously, is already a power of the immortal life. And the deepest thing that is in us, inspiring the exertion of that power of the immortal life, is a great yearning to express these qualities

which we dimly know are within us. We desire to put forth the power that we have, and thereby gain more power out of the great realms of God, which in turn we may put forth for the blessing of our brothers and the laying of the earthly foundations of the kingdom of God. We desire, each and every one of us, to express ourselves, our natures, our whole being. We desire in that self-expression and by that self-expression to bring ourselves into contact with God, so that we shall know day by day more and more about God, and so make him the greatest and nearest reality of all our experience. We desire with this great and wonderful longing to find satisfaction in living, so as to be glad that we are alive day by day, moment by moment, in that we are able in some way to express ourselves, and by the very joy of that expression to come to the consciousness that we have that in us which is worth expressing.

Yet behold the conditions which we find confronting us. Inspired as we are by such magnificent yearnings, such splendid ideals and hopes, we find ourselves faced by a world which seems to be dominated by hardship, by perplexity, by disappointment, by loss, by sorrow, by things that crush our souls. It often seems as if the harder we tried to express that which is best in us the more forcibly we come up against those barriers, shall I call them? Whatever they are, we group them under the name of life's discipline. Whoso is bravest seems to have the most to contend against. Whosoever is patient and innocent in his living seems to have the most of affliction turned upon his life.

How are we to interpret this relation between our eager spirits and the world in which we are compelled to live? Grant again everything that the man of science claims under the name of evolution; grant that the experience of our race and of the creatures from which we descended

have brought forth these relations which exist between us and between ourselves and nature. Still, we do not interpret those hard conditions and our relation to them by going back to the beginnings. You cannot interpret anything human by searching out the origin of all things human. The only way to interpret our life is to study our own souls as they are now, conscious of their immortality, conscious of their nearness to the life of God. Let us study human souls and see what is the effect upon them of these conditions of living which are called the disciplines of life. Many interpretations are offered.

There are those who tell us that these hard things in life are dark shadows coming between the light and the creatures of God that cannot live without light. They tell us that these dread things of life are to be likened to a vast swarm of repulsive vultures gathering around that which is about to die. They tell us that these trials are something to be battled with, that they are foes of our finer being, that they are the instrumentalities of the great enemy of God. They even dare to tell us that these things display the wrath of God. So they interpret life as a hedged-in thing, and tell us that our restless spirits are simply chafing under conditions which offer nothing but opposition to everything that is best in the human soul. So they call us to arms whenever they ask us to serve God and humanity, and urge us to come out and fight, — fight our enemies, beat down the things that obstruct our progress.

How easy it is to respond to that great appeal! The challenge to arms moves every strong nature; and when we answer it, and take the world that we live in as a hostile thing, feeling that we are indeed given over by God into the hands of Satan for some mysterious reason ever unknown to us, then how easy it is for us to imagine that, whatever we do, God is on our side, and not on the other

side! How easy it is, under that law of living, to imagine that we are following our fine ambition to express our being, when we are simply asserting ourselves in a way that is not noble, but chiefly animated by the desire to win, to put down something, to overcome some force or party, some army or nation that may be opposed to our own! It seems to me that this interpretation of life is deficient in the fundamental principle of Christian living, that of self-denial. A certain type of self-sacrifice appears in the life of the soldier who is the representative of this interpretation of life. Where wars have led men to strive against men with the great ambition of winning victories, there have been many things given up, even life itself. There men have displayed courage, which in the pages of romance and reality alike always inspires us. Yet back of that note of triumph which comes to us out of the military life there lies the great, underlying, mournful wail of them that suffer wrong, of them that are beaten down with sorrows that need not have been. So we learn that that kind of self-sacrifice is a self-sacrifice which gets so overwhelmed with the vision of glory as to forget the consequences of rushing onward after glory, as to forget the sorrows, the afflictions, and the sins that have ever followed in the trail of the simple militant life. No, let us seek another interpretation of this life of ours.

There are other people who hold to the opinion that our life is a completed thing, that in the present there is little that is great, that whosoever would come into contact with human greatness, with beautiful living, must go back into the dim past, where men have indeed wrought wondrously well. They devote themselves to the purely studious life, knowing, as is very true, that the record of a thousand years of human experience can show very much more of glory and completeness and beauty than can the record laid before us in any one day by the newspapers.

So they say this time of ours does not produce those beautiful things that shine out of the records of a thousand years. They say that whosoever would find ideals of righteousness, whosoever would find human strength, the ability and the power of putting forth the things that are great, must go back into the past and see what men have done. When the ardent souls of the present, active world come to these people who know the goodness of the past, and tell them with brave, young emotion what they mean to do for the uplifting of the world, these who think that life is completed always reply, "That has been tried, my young friend; that has been tried." Everything that you propose to these people "has been tried." And the restless spirit, overcome by the perception of the reality of life so as for a moment to overlook the natural reverence for human experience, can but reply, "Yes, tried by *you;* but *I* have not tried these ways, and *I* propose to try them." Why, it is given to every one who will deeply and nobly understand the possibilities of his being to know that it is not the success of effort that is the chief thing, but the effort itself. Through ages on ages men have tried to do beautiful things; and men for ages and ages to come will patiently and bravely and ignorantly, if you will, go on trying to do these same things, unconsciously aware that it is the trying that brings out human life.

It is the endeavor that makes us be what we can be; and, compared with the endeavor, all the results are as nothing. Heaven lies out there before us; but it is the effort to get there that means something to strong souls, not the living therein. Whosoever found himself in heaven, free from responsibility, free from all difficulty, could do nothing but follow the example of the Master as it is outlined in that fable of ancient Rome. Peter, discouraged by the great difficulty of the task in which

he was engaged, had deserted the cause, and was fleeing from that wicked city, when he met the mysterious figure of his Master, and asked him, "Whither goest thou, Lord?" And his Master answered, "To Rome." Of course, what could the Master do but turn his back on heaven, and go to the place where the stress of life is most serious? Where can any man, if he desires to express himself in works that shall be of use to the world, find a possibility of expressing himself other than under conditions which are hard? No, life is not a completed thing. Adam and Eve, to turn to another old fable and find a hidden truth in it, — Adam and Eve, created mature and happy, must of necessity prove to be moral weaklings. Not until the flaming sword blazed between them and their paradise did they begin to do anything for this race or for God.

There is hinted the true interpretation of life, — an interpretation which recognizes this existence of ours as one of responsible progress. These hard things that come down upon us so overwhelmingly are not to be taken as something to be fought against, but as something to be used by souls that know how to employ material that is given to them, used in the cause of all righteousness, used in the putting forth of the power that is in us. Shaped though they may be by human experience, and elaborated before that by the natural processes of evolution, still what they say to us from the great mind of God is, "Here, child of mine, is at last a chance for you to be something stronger and finer than you have ever been before." When the sorrows of my life come down upon me, I may in my human ignorance of the future pray that the cup may pass from my lips; but, when that cup actually touches my lips, then I have a chance to be patient, earnest, consecrated unto all good things, such as I never had before.

How *could* any human soul grow in the power of patience, taking up this germ that is in him by the love of God and making it grow day by day to be larger than it is, — how could he possibly do it unless he had something that required patience of him? How could we by any possibility put forth into this world the splendid influence of purity of heart, unless there were continually confronting us possibilities of being something other than pure in heart? Take any noble quality of our lives, and apply to it that test. You will find that every hardship that comes to any human soul, howsoever excessive the hardship may be, gives him the chance so to use it as to become a better soul than he has been before. He may not be glad that it has come. It may not add to the happiness of his life. Of two men, one of them innocently and jubilantly happy day by day and the other one commanded by a certain fine public spirit and a disciplined self-control under his vision of the things that are, — of these two, which one is worth more to you and to this world and to God? Not the merely happy man ever. Yet I have seen enough of life to dare to believe that, whensoever any human soul takes hold of his life in the spirit of the soldier who goes forth to serve and not simply to fight, and acts constantly by the great purpose of building the kingdom of God and his righteousness, — invariably unto that man there are added certain lesser sweet things of life, — contentment, happiness, or something else which satisfies him just as well.

So in the case of these sorrows, difficulties, afflictions, which we call discipline: it is given to us to put forth our simple human will. It is given to every man to say, —

> "It matters not how strait the gate,
> How charged with punishment the scroll;
> I am the master of my fate,
> I am the captain of my soul."

Oh, it is wondrously true that "the path of duty is the way to glory;" wondrously true that all glory, which can permanently satisfy those who deserve it, all glory which can be laid before God as a tribute to him, is won by those who follow the path of duty, and understand that the path of duty is the daily, patient, splendid dealing with those things that are monotonous and difficult in our several lives. God asks us to be good; and here all around us, like flowers in our way, he scatters opportunities to be good, and to do something that is helpful, something that is patient, something that is pure. He asks us that we follow the Master in the great demonstration of the law of self-sacrifice; and here by our way there are opportunities for us to do that thing, and nothing to prevent us from doing it save the weakness that exists in our souls. The true interpretation of life is one that will help men to see that the hardships of life, the sorrows and the pains of life, are a throne unto which we are all born by virtue of our being heirs of God. It is a throne of power, and whosoever lightly or timidly abdicates that throne does a weak and shameful deed.

We are told by those who do not interpret life on this basis that the picture which is called "The Man with the Hoe" displays the hard and oppressive limitations under which those that toil must ever live. Now far be it from me to say a word which would seem to indicate a lack of sympathy for those who are obliged to toil under circumstances more oppressive than those which I myself have to meet. I venture to claim that I know something about the harder and more oppressive conditions of life; but because I know these things, and because I have seen human souls dealing with them magnificently, I dare to interpret the most difficult lives by saying, you must round out the picture of "The Man with the Hoe" with another picture of the same artist, "The Angelus," and

recognize that at any moment the man with the hoe can find the true meaning of what he is about by lifting up his spirit unto God. At any moment any human being, engaged in whatsoever trials and difficulties and limitations, can take hold of those things, and so deal with them as to wrest all moral possibilities from them, and to rise in majesty before those who observe, and reveal the glory of spiritual living, — gain, in short, the only thing for which an immortal life is given.

Go on doing all that you can for all those who are troubled and oppressed, but do not so belittle their immortal souls as to imagine that you have to change the conditions of their lives before they can find noble expression of what is loveliest in human nature. We all have our chance, and therefore we ought all of us to be glad that we are alive. We ought all of us to go on from the footing where we now stand, and put forth the qualities that are within us by means of the opportunities which God has given us, understanding, through this Christian interpretation of life, that our difficulties are divine opportunities, and not limitations set up by Satan.

The great symbol of the cross of Christ expresses this side of life. Do not think that the cross was a limitation upon the life of Jesus. The cross was to him what these crosses of ours are to us, — his moral opportunity. In the presence of that opportunity, what did he not do for this world of ours! Set forth the cross still as the symbol of the opportunities of life, but say that the life of Christ itself is the symbol of our immortal life. The cross that he bore is but the symbol of the crosses that we bear, — simply the symbol to show us that in the hardships of life appear man's grandest open doors. If life is not hard for anybody, his first duty under God is to go out and find something that is hard. There is no other way to get that cross upon one's shoulder than to go out and find

something that is hard. These hopes for easy living, these unappreciative words about a heaven that shall give rest everlasting, — how wide they are from the mark that is set for us by the cross of our Master!

Life, then, is not a battle. Put it the other way, and it will be true: battle is a life. Battle of all kinds gives us the chance to live, the chance to be men and women, the chance to be heroic, the chance to be divine. Life appeals to us still for the soldierly spirit. But instead of that old-time inspiration which comes to us from the clanking accoutrements of war, instead of that inward exaltation in us which military music calls out, we are coming at last to feel the leadership of Christ, and to see so clearly and so happily the thrilling ideals of the loftiest life that come down to us from God through our teacher as to find in them the same power of appeal that has been given to the soldier of the olden days by the mere call to arms. It is given to us to turn upon these perils of our daily lives instead of fleeing from them when we can; to turn upon them and take them as the opportunities of our lives in such a fashion that we shall be able to make the books and the tools we use flash continually as with the gleaming of the sword; able to give to the ordinary incidents of our lives the insistence of musketry, and all the power and dignity and lift that romance has thrown into the marching of armies of men and the contending of men on desperate fields of battle.

Action, then, is the keynote of this interpretation of our lives. Being immortal is always better than winning immortality. Building heaven here upon earth is of necessity better for us now than any thought of heaven that is to come, though our hearts are filled with the conviction that an immortal progress lies before us all.

Now, it is given to our church, to all churches of the Christian name, — and I dare say to many other churches

that do not take the Christian name, — it is given to us to stand upon these massive foundations of faith and interpret to our land the life that human souls must live. It is given to us to go out and interpret unto a nation that nation's grief, — the greatest work that has ever been undertaken by man. Statesmen may interpret unto their nations the relations between land and land. The teachers whom we honor may interpret unto us the true laws of human society. But the greatest work to which the mind can turn is to go out and interpret unto human souls the griefs that come upon them, to go out and interpret to a nation the underlying divine purposes that are to be found in everything that is sad, in every affliction, in every crime, to see the larger meaning of the hero's death, to go out and show our nation, comrades, — you and I, — to go out and show our nation that by virtue of the underlying justice of God our revered President has done more for us, more for the progress of righteousness in this world, more for the setting forth of all things that were dear to his heart, by dying with the simple Christian courage that he showed than he possibly could have done by living among us many more years. Whosoever can see these things can teach the whole world to possess their spirits in magnificent patience in recognition of the unfailing law of God, by which we are all always, under all circumstances, controlled. He knows the deeps of life who can interpret unto the land how God, in his infinite wisdom, can take up even the blind wickedness of a fool and make that a part of the growth of righteousness in a nation.

Whosoever is able to interpret such things and keep hold of the hand of the present God through all national difficulties, and all personal ones, he is the man and that is the church that in the years that are to come are going to make Christianity the power over reasonable minds

that it is surely destined to be. Oh, the joy of it! to be able to make men glad that they are alive, and, though the whole land be swarming with iniquity, to make people see the beauty of the beautiful life and the possibility of making life beautiful in every corner of every city in the world! to be able to go out and show to men that here and now we are living in a golden age! There never will be, there never was, *the* golden age. We are living in that which is golden, and that is enough for our satisfaction; for it appeals unto everything that is in us. It draws out all the powers that we have just so fast as they spring up in our being. O Church of God, come ye up to these mountain tops, these peaks of the glory of interpreting life deeply and well! Take these things of faith, — faith in God, faith in your own souls, faith in other souls, faith in the interminable future, — take these splendid things of faith and go out and interpret them to human souls wheresoever you find any one who does not know that life is a glorious thing.

Give to us for this work, fathers and mothers, your finest youth. Oh, to think of the fathers and mothers that have turned aside brave, young minds that were inclined to go into this ministry of the interpretation of life, turned them aside from that highest of all things human, and asked them to do works that are less potent! Give to us, not the boys and girls that cannot do anything else, but the finest youth of your homes, and we will give them work to do that will strain every nerve in them, and enable them to put forth power upon power, of which they may never dream if they go into any other life.

There lies before the Church of God in this world of ours a destiny compared with which all the glories of the past shall be forgotten. For never, in completeness, in patience, in great breadth of action, has this Christian

interpretation of life been given unto man. Here and there in the past we find a man who has been both a hero and a wise soul, and has put forth his activities on such a basis; but the Christian Church as a whole has never even dimly understood the possibility of doing it. When at last the Christian Church does range up to the level of the life of its Master, then it will produce results which will prove how much better than any other sphere for human activity is that offered by the privilege of interpreting life so as to make men glad that they have a chance of grappling with the things that are hard. When that generous gladness comes, then the man who has been moaning because he is downtrodden wakes up and sees at last that in the fact that he is downtrodden he has a challenge from God which enables him to bring out splendid things in his soul. Rightly proclaimed, this interpretation inspires him to forget his poor oppressor in the splendid joy of the things he is accomplishing by God's grace through the foolishness of the oppressor.

We have got to revolutionize our modern methods of charity. We have got to revolutionize our preaching. We have got to get a new comprehension of the possibilities of Christianity. We are to go forth under the banner of our leader, doing these things. There are many others who are doing it, God be praised! but we are freer in some ways to enter upon this service. Why is it that we are not all on fire, every one who calls himself a Unitarian, on fire with the splendid example that is always set before us by our Master bearing his cross? How is it that each and every one of us, preachers and laity alike, are not eagerly grasping for our cross, in order to go out and follow the Master, and live so gloriously well as to make not only ourselves happy, but to give happiness to many others day by day? It is only the bearing of the cross that will accomplish this. It is only toil that permits

high self-expression. It is only they that are pioneers in advancing the interests of humanity that are in the best possible way able to interpret by their actions this glorious human life; and, if we interpret it according to our strength and vision, we can lead the army of those who live thus nobly.

It is your privilege and mine thus to take a manful part in these coming grander days of an enlightened and invigorated Christianity. If we will interpret life according to our vision, and live according to our inner strength, making both speech and action proclaim the glory of the doing of duty, we shall render unto God an acceptable sacrifice, and unto men an inspiring service.

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THE DIVINITY OF JESUS.

BY

REV. ALEXANDER T. BOWSER.

AMERICAN UNITARIAN ASSOCIATION

BOSTON.

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The Fatherhood of God.
The Brotherhood of Man.
The Leadership of Jesus.
Salvation by Character.
The Progress of Mankind,
onward and upward forever.

Typical Covenant of a Unitarian Church.

In the love of the truth, and the spirit of Jesus Christ, we unite for the worship of God and the service of man.

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(*As expressed in the By-Laws of the American Unitarian Association*).

"The object of the American Unitarian Association shall be to diffuse the knowledge and promote the interests of pure Christianity; and all Unitarian Christians shall be invited to unite and co-operate with it for that purpose."

(*As expressed by the National Conference of Unitarian and Other Christian Churches, at Saratoga, N. Y., in 1894.*)

"These Churches accept the religion of Jesus, holding, in accordance with his teaching, that practical religion is summed up in love to God and love to man.

"The Conference recognizes the fact that its constituency is Congregational in tradition and polity. Therefore, it declares that nothing in this Constitution is to be construed as an authoritative test; and we cordially invite to our working fellowship any who, while differing from us in belief, are in general sympathy with our spirit and our practical aims."

THE DIVINITY OF JESUS.

"God, who at sundry times and in divers manners spake in times past unto the fathers by the prophets, hath in these last days spoken unto us by his Son, who was the brightness of his glory, and the express image of his person." — HEBREWS i. 1–3.

Two radically different views of the nature and character of Jesus are found running all through the history of the Christian Church. One may be called the supernatural, and the other the natural view of his divinity. The supernatural view is that held by Trinitarians, and the natural view by Unitarians. But can Unitarians rightly say that Jesus was divine, when they do not believe that he was God? Yes; because the word "divine" is an adjective expressing godlike qualities, and there are degrees of divinity as of other qualities. Thus we speak of an action as divine in its character, or of a thing as having divine beauty. Or we may say that there is more divinity in goodness than in power; the work of a missionary more divine than that of a soldier. But we cannot qualify the nature of the Deity. God is absolute in wisdom, power, love, knowledge. It is well, however, to remember that when Trinitarians say they believe Jesus was divine, they usually mean that he was God in the absolute sense; but when Unitarians speak of his divinity, they mean that he was godlike in life and character, that he manifested divine qualities under human limitations. And this use of the word is perfectly right, and should lead to no confusion of thought regarding the nature and mission of Jesus. When we perceive the presence of God in the outward

world — in its beauty, bounty, harmony — we correctly say that nature is divine; and no one supposes that we are confusing nature with God. Moreover, if we see godlike qualities in the character and teaching of Jesus, we may think and speak of him as divine, without identifying him with the Deity in any unique or special sense whatever.

We have no evidence that the Christian Church held any particular theory regarding the divinity of Jesus during the first two hundred years of its history. But in the third century discussions about his supernatural origin began to appear; and in the year 325 the great Council at Nicea was held to determine the true doctrine. Then from that date on, for several hundred years, controversies concerning the nature of the Christ fill an important place in nearly every chapter of Church history. These discussions had no reference whatever to the practical life and teaching of the Master; they referred only to what he was in the mysterious depths of being. Not what his friends and disciples thought about him while he was still among them, nor how he became conscious of his filial relation to God, and was able to impart his convictions to his followers, leading them to believe that they too were the sons and daughters of the same God whom he called Father; but what constituted him the Supreme Being in human form was the object of every debate, the end of all controversy. And then, whatever the majority decided to be the true doctrine was put into the creed; and this creed the people must accept as the confession of the Church, or be condemned as heretics. And to be a heretic in those days meant to be an outlaw, with no standing in Church or State. In this way the followers of Sabellius were condemned for teaching that the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost were three different

forms of the same Being; and the Arians, because they believed that Jesus was not the same in substance with God, but was created by God of a similar substance; and others, for doubting that he had two distinct natures, the human and the divine; and still others because they thought he had only one will. Then, when all the various heresies had been condemned, one after another, the opinions of the majority were summed up in what is called the Athanasian Creed, in which the Christ is declared to be coeternal and coequal with God. This creed, however, was not written by Athanasius himself, as is generally supposed, but by some unknown person hundreds of years afterwards. In his history of the Eastern Church, Dean Stanley speaks of it as a "hymn," and says that "it is of French or Spanish origin."

The supernatural view of the divinity of Christ maintains that the great Teacher of Galilee, who lived as a man among men, was tempted as they were, prayed as a man prays, struggled to bring his will into harmony with the divine will, even as men of God have striven in all ages and lands, and then at last died the shameful death of the cross,—this view ascribes to this man of Nazareth all the attributes of Deity; that he was the infinite and eternal Being, above all things, beneath all things, within all things, the Creator, Sustainer, and Guide of the whole vast universe of life and thought and activity. This theory of his nature asserts that he was Divine because of his miraculous birth and supernatural power, because he gave his life a sacrifice for sin and then rose from the dead on the third day, because in some strange and unexplained manner the Divine and the human were so united in him that as God he became man in order to suffer and die for the sins of the world.

Though in brief outline, I think that this is a fair

presentation of the Trinitarian view of the divinity of Christ. Moreover, to deny this doctrine is not simply regarded as heresy; it is considered disloyalty to Jesus, and infidelity to his religion; while to accept and believe it is the only means of obtaining everlasting salvation.

But, to my mind, to think of Jesus as Deity destroys the noblest example of manhood the world has ever known, without adding anything to the idea of God as plainly taught in the Gospel. It takes away our human Teacher, and puts in his place a mysterious being who is neither God nor man, but sometimes the one and sometimes the other. Indeed, this is my chief objection to the doctrine of the Trinity: it obscures and mystifies that simple and beautiful life of heroic self-sacrifice and devotion to duty; and in the place of our brother man,—to whom the Spirit was given without measure, full of grace and truth, and in whose character we see the brightness of the divine glory, an image of the divine personality, — it gives us a God disguised as a man, who is acting a part in the great drama of redemption, and not living the real life of a human soul at all.

If Jesus was the infinite and eternal God, his perfect self-sacrifice and sublime devotion to duty are not the human love and consecration to which we may aspire; his courage and constancy in the face of all opposition and his manly struggle against temptation have no meaning to one who is buffeted and bewildered by the storms of life, and beset on every side with the allurements of evil. In our experience his "blessed are the pure in heart" and his command to be "perfect even as the Father in heaven is perfect" become downright mockery, if he was pure in heart and godlike in character himself, not because of natural human attainments, but through the miracle of a supernatural birth. In times of weakness

when harassed by temptation, overcome by evil, crushed by disappointment and sorrow, how can it help us human beings to think that he as God overcame the power of sin, and in every trial remained faithful and true? But when we look upon his constant fidelity to his convictions and his resolute submission to the divine will, notwithstanding the seeming defeat of his Gospel and the failure of his mission, and remember that in all things (as the apostle says) "he was made like unto his brethren," and yet never yielded to doubt or fear, nor fell into any sin, it strengthens the fainting heart, renews our courage and inspires us with fresh hope in the possibilities of our own nature, helping us to meet temptation and endure hardships in his spirit of unshrinking manliness and far-reaching faith. When we think of Jesus as God, he ceases to be an example to us; but when we look upon him as the New Testament writers describe him — "a man approved of God" — a man "made perfect through sufferings" — his whole life becomes radiant with divine beauty, his path of self-sacrifice the way to heaven, his truth the power of God to free the soul and fill it with the inspiration of faith and hope.

This is the natural view of the divinity of Jesus. It does not seek to explain the metaphysical question of the relation of the human with the divine in his soul, nor does it attempt to prove that he was or was not God; but teaches that he was divine — that is, godlike — because in his life and teaching we find a manifestation of those qualities which we believe to be attributes of God. The highest ideas of God taught by religion or philosophy have always represented goodness as belonging to the character of Deity; and the most perfect goodness the world has any history of was enacted in the life of Jesus. Prophets and preachers of righteousness have ever proclaimed the

protecting care of God; but the thought of Jesus soared higher than all others, revealed a heart of Infinite Love as the centre of life, and taught the world to call it "Our Father."

This natural and rational view of the character of Jesus shows how he became the Son of God and one with the Father by his life of filial obedience to the divine voice in his soul, and by entire submission to the divine will as he discerned it in his daily experience. Through constant communion with the Divine Spirit he became conscious that he was in the Father and the Father in him. Thus he became a revelation of God, unveiling the divine fatherhood by his human teaching and human living. As, when gazing into a clear lake at mid-day, we see not the water itself, but an image of the heavens pictured in its peaceful stillness, so, looking into the pure soul of Jesus, we behold in its spiritual depths, not the man of Nazareth, but the Over-Soul in which "we live and move and have our being," and learn the meaning of that word to Philip, "He that hath seen me hath seen the Father." The more we study the life and teaching of Jesus the more plainly do we see his simple humanity. But it was humanity filled with the inspiration of God, though in a way that left him still a human being, the highest ideal of what a man may become who yields his powers of heart and mind to the influence of the indwelling Spirit. So entirely oblivious were the writers of the New Testament to any essential difference between the nature of Jesus and the nature of his disciples and friends that, everywhere throughout the book, the Master and his followers are equally regarded as "the offspring of God," "partakers of the divine nature." If Jesus is called the Son of God, St. John writes of all Christians, "Now are we the sons of God;" and St. Paul also declares that "As

many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God." It was this same apostle who, beholding the beauty and truth and goodness of the Christ, with admiration and reverence exclaimed, "In him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily." We wonder at such an expression, and can hardly believe that its author could have used it of a man — a mere human being. And yet when we turn to his Epistle to the Ephesians, we find him praying that his fellow-Christians "might be filled with all the fulness of God."

Thus we could go through the New Testament and, whatever terms are used to express the nature and character of Jesus, we find the same terms used in reference to his disciples. For instance, we read that he was without sin; and this is thought to be a strong argument against his being strictly human. But the apostle takes it for granted that "whosoever is born of God doth not commit sin," — meaning, doubtless, that whenever a man becomes conscious of his filial relation to God, his whole nature is so dignified by the conviction that, like the Christ, he will live a pure and true life. Furthermore, Jesus is called the Light of the world, though not in any peculiar sense; for we hear his own voice announcing to a crowd of common people gathered on a grassy hill in Palestine that they also were the light of the world. The Church regards Jesus as the Saviour of men, and so he is, since love for him and faith in his truth will lift the soul above all sin and doubt and fear, and bring God near to the heart as our personal Friend and Helper. But if he were sent to earth to become its Saviour in a supernatural sense, he does not seem to know it himself; for he distinctly associates his disciples with him in this divine work, saying to them, "As the Father hath sent me, even so send I you."

We see then that, according to the New Testament, Jesus, far from being identical with God, was not different from his brethren in any essential element of human nature. His divinity was a natural quality of the soul, and not a supernatural power with which he was endowed through the miracle of incarnation. Either he was unqualifiedly human in his nature and attainments, or his friends and disciples were not human; for what he was they also were, or hoped to become. Nay, more, they always spoke of him as a man like themselves, except that he was more godlike than others — "having learned obedience by the things which he suffered." They all believed themselves to be the sons and daughters of God, but regarded Jesus as the well-beloved Son, "who was the brightness of his glory, and the express image of his person." Nor did they make the mistake of confusing the image or likeness of God with God himself, and declare that this dear child whom they believed to be "the first born among many brethren" was coeternal and coequal with the Father. All such statements concerning the Christ were put into the creeds hundreds of years afterwards.

We believe, therefore, that Jesus was divine because he was godlike in character, and taught the world this way of living. He makes the goodness and love of God real to us by his own pure life — his self-sacrificing devotion to truth and duty, his love for God and man. When we read the story of the Gospel, study its precepts, and accept its principles as our rule of life, a new light shines into the mind by which God is seen to be our Father, heaven near by, and life full of divine love and goodness.

Thus we come to see the true divinity of Jesus in the fact that he reveals God to our hearts, and helps us to

live as he himself lived, with one hand in the hand of God, and the other extended in help to God's needy children.

This, then, is the way that Unitarians believe in the divinity of Jesus. And we think our faith reasonable and inspiring, and also in harmony with the spirit of the New Testament. Instead of confusing the mind and chilling the heart with the philosophic statements of the creeds, we go direct to the Gospel itself, and there we touch hands with the Christ as our brother and friend; and, through him, are led as by an open door into the very presence of God, and know him to be the universal Father.

Theodore Parker, who was the first Christian preacher in this country to insist on the perfect naturalness of the religion of Jesus, has expressed this view of his divinity in a hymn which is very dear to Unitarians as exactly voicing our allegiance to the Christ, whose name we bear, whose sway we own, whose love wells up in our hearts, and whose spirit goes forth in our lives for the healing and uplifting of the world: —

"O thou great Friend to all the sons of men,
Who once appeared in humblest guise below,
Sin to rebuke, to break the captive's chain,
And call thy brethren forth from want and woe!
We look to thee; thy truth is still the light
Which guides the nations, groping on their way,
Stumbling and falling in disastrous night,
Yet hoping ever for the perfect day.
Yes: thou art still the Life; thou art the Way
The holiest know, — Light, Life, and Way of heaven;
And they who dearest hope, and deepest pray,
Toil by the light, life, way, which thou hast given."

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[illegible] [No. [illegible]

THE

WORTH OF ENTHUSIASM.

BY

REV. EDWARD EVERETT HALE, D.D.

AMERICAN UNITARIAN ASSOCIATION
BOSTON

Our Faith.

The Fatherhood of God.
The Brotherhood of Man.
The Leadership of Jesus.
Salvation by Character.
The Progress of Mankind,
onward and upward forever.

Typical Covenant of a Unitarian Church.

In the love of the truth, and the spirit of Jesus Christ, we unite for the worship of God and the service of man.

Our Declaration

(*As expressed in the By-Laws of the American Unitarian Association*).

"The object of the American Unitarian Association shall be to diffuse the knowledge and promote the interests of pure Christianity; and all Unitarian Christians shall be invited to unite and co-operate with it for that purpose."

(*As expressed by the National Conference of Unitarian and Other Christian Churches, at Saratoga, N. Y., in 1894.*)

"These Churches accept the religion of Jesus, holding, in accordance with his teaching, that practical religion is summed up in love to God and love to man.

"The Conference recognizes the fact that its constituency is Congregational in tradition and polity. Therefore, it declares that nothing in this Constitution is to be construed as an authoritative test; and we cordially invite to our working fellowship any who, while differing from us in belief, are in general sympathy with our spirit and our practical aims."

THE WORTH OF ENTHUSIASM.

"I have given you authority to tread upon serpents and scorpions, and over all the power of the enemy; and nothing shall by any means hurt you." — LUKE X. 19.

IT is a vivid statement, in prophetic symbolism, of the sway of their enthusiasm over the obstacles which were to come before them. The history of those centuries more than makes good the prophecy. These people, forgetting themselves, and determined to bring in the kingdom of God, went forward, conquering and to conquer; and it was as he said, — the annoying serpents and scorpions, who are in the pathway of such travellers, should not hinder them so but that they should succeed. If you talk to-day to any low-toned person who has been in the West Indies, he will tell you of the abomination of the scorpions who perhaps stray upon your pillows, and of the terror of the serpents who infest the forests. But for all that, when the Spanish race landed there, determined to find gold, they went forward to success, — they trod upon the serpents and the scorpions, and they do not so much as appear in their history.

Here, then, is Christ's statement of the aggressive power of Christian enthusiasm. It is a statement made in advance, and we may make a like statement as we look backward upon the course of history. Just at this moment the English-speaking world is called upon to ask whether it believes that this statement is still true, or whether the more mechanical processes of the nineteenth century have gained such control of society that we can no longer rely upon it. The square statement which General Booth makes, in this remarkable book of his, "In Darkest England," is that he and his are able to tread on the serpents and scorpions which have deterred other people in their efforts to clean up the dark places of London, and to bring in the light of a decent civilization in their place. To this the Archbishop of Canterbury and Mr. Huxley and the people, whom I may call the regulation philanthropists, reply that it is quite impossible. They say that there are a great many serpents in the way, and a great many very annoying scorpions in the way. They tell how large the scorpions are, — they have measured some of them. And they tell how bad the bite of the serpents is, and they say that, with such obstacles in the way, it is idle to undertake to relieve these difficulties. They say the serpents must be killed and the scorpions stifled first; and yet they do not show any method of killing the serpents or of stifling the scorpions. It

is quite as in the Book of Proverbs it is said that the sluggard says, there is a lion in the path. Not that it is fair to say that the Archbishop of Canterbury or Mr. Huxley are either of them indolent men. But it is quite fair to say that the lions which they see out of their windows, or think they see, are so hungry and noisy that they dare not leave palace or college to go out to attack them.

General Booth does. General Booth says that he has an army of fanatics at his disposal, who will do what he tells them to do, and that the enthusiasm of their Christian faith is so great that it will enable them to overcome the inconveniences which they find in their way. He does not use the particular figure which the Saviour uses, of serpents and scorpions. He knows that the nineteenth century prefers to have square statements of the visible fact. It does not like this form of Oriental imagery, and it considers it quite out of the way. So he devotes himself, with more or less statistical statement, such as the nineteenth century does like, to show how he can take the tramps who have gathered together in the worst regions of London; how he can embody them under a certain military form; how he can march them into the country, and place them on farms which we should think ridiculously small; how he can set them upon market-gardening; or, at the least, how every man with a spade can earn his

own ration. This, at bottom, is the plan for darkest England which General Booth proposes. And for this plan he is now engaged in collecting five hundred thousand dollars as a capital stock, and an annual income of one hundred fifty thousand dollars to carry it forward, till, in its success, it shall support itself. I have not observed that he once speaks of it as an experiment. He speaks with the definiteness with which the Saviour of men himself speaks. He says that they have divine power with them, that they will tread on all the serpents, that they will stifle all the scorpions, and that nothing shall by any means hurt them as they go about this endeavor.

It will be my duty in another place to speak of the detail of General Booth's plans, as far as it seems useful for us to consider them. Our business this morning is with the emphatic reliance which the Saviour places upon men's enthusiasm for mankind, in his promises of that coming kingdom to which we look forward. In the contrast between the races of men, it is generally supposed that the people of that race who were called the descendants of Shem, of that race by whom he was himself surrounded, have more of that working enthusiasm than has fallen to the share of the great Aryan race of which we are, or to the Eastern races of which the Chinese and Japanese are, the best representatives, or to that race which has always been at the bottom, which makes up the

nations of Africa. Thus it is observed that all the religions of the world have come from Western or Southern Asia, and a great deal more than is worth while has been made of this coincidence. For myself, I suppose that religion is the natural tie between the child and the father. I suppose that it expresses the natural relation of man with God. And I do not believe, therefore, that there was any more religion in Abraham than there was in Massasoit, or in Cetewayo, or in Abraham Lincoln. The mere accidental expression must not be overstated. But with such speculation we have here little to do. Let us rather notice that there has been enthusiasm enough in our race to do everything that the Scripture gives in the list of the triumphs of the children of Abraham. The men of our race, when they were set to do it, "have subdued kingdoms, have wrought righteousness, have obtained promises, have stopped the mouths of lions, have quenched the violence of fire, out of weakness have been made strong, have waxed valiant in the fight, and have put to flight the armies of the aliens." I would not ask for better examples of enthusiasm and daring than were given us by Columbus and his men, or by Cortez and his. I would not ask for enthusiasm more pronounced than that which sent our forefathers to Plymouth, or that which set Ann Lee's disciples to make gardens out of deserts. There is no lack of enthusiasm if there is anybody to

start enthusiasm, and you have only to go this afternoon to hear the words spoken in the Salvation Army, or you have only to go to-morrow to see what those people are doing in the slums of Boston, to see that whatever else they lack, they do not lack enthusiasm, because they speak the English language or are born in the Anglo-Saxon race. It is possibly true, however, that a certain timidity or shyness belongs to people of English descent. It is the cause of their inability to express all they feel, so that, when John Foster's son dies, he tells his father that it is only within that half-hour that he has had any conception of how much his father loved him.

We are constantly hearing of such instances. The false shame, as the French call it, of the Englishman, and, to a certain extent, of his successors in New England, keeps his lips closed, so that he does not tell his friend how much he loves him, he does not tell how large are his plans, he is afraid to be called a fanatic, and conceals from the world his very noblest aspirations. All the same, however, it is to be observed that this race goes into crusades under the lead of Peter the Hermit, that it compasses sea and land when it is led by Columbus or by Magellan, or in our times by Hayes or by Greeley. The pent-up enthusiasm which did not find language, exists in some magnificent outburst of concentrated effort. In the instance to which I have alluded, General

Booth is relying upon this concentrated enthusiasm, working under such regulation and discipline as he has established for his army. I do not myself believe that we need here a great deal of that especial form of the Salvation Army. Fortunately for us, we have solved a good many of the problems which England has still to solve, and there has thus resulted a sort of prosperity for each and every class here which in England seems to belong only on the higher circles of their social order. While I recognize, therefore, with gratitude, what these humble and despised people are doing, here in Boston, in New York, and in our other cities, I do not believe we need to call upon them to work any such miracles as General Booth is calling for there. But you and I ought to remember that, for the great problems which are before us now, we have in reserve just such a reservoir, shall I say, of human power, which can do literally what it will in the reformation of the world and the improvement of society, when once it sees what the needs of the social order are, and when once it knows that the good God calls for such miracles.

A venerable friend of ours listened uneasily to some of the poor materialism which tries to account for manhood and its victories by talk about phosphorus and electricity. He waited impatiently till he had a right to speak, and then said, "John, you do not believe that the uprising of America in

1861, when this people as one man swept away all obstacles, — one man, indeed, for union and freedom, — you do not believe that this was nothing but the consentaneous ticking of ten million pendulums! It was the enthusiastic determination of ten million children of God." Now such enthusiasm is a power as distinctly to be relied upon as is the rising of the tide or the flow of a river. And any statesman or reformer does not know the alphabet of his business who does not rely upon it, as the Law to which the God of History has intrusted the advance and enlightenment of his world.

It is desirable to remember this, and to illustrate it, that we may always look forward to large successes. Only those who have scanty resources, finite and fallible, will be satisfied with small plans. "We will abolish slavery," said the Abolitionist. And they did so. "We will make the desert blossom like the rose," said Daniel Boone and Manasseh Cutler. And they did so. "We will cover this land with a net-work of railways," said another forward-looking army of inventors. And they did so. They trod on serpents and scorpions, if you please; but they had that enthusiasm which permits men to do so, — "so that nothing shall by any means hurt you." For the future, we have the same rights to do large things rather than small. "It is often easier to do a great thing than a little one." Thus, when John Adams says that in America every man and woman should have a

liberal education, he proposes a condition wholly unknown in his time, wholly unknown in ours, but definite and possible to the power of genuine enthusiasm. When some man tells you that you ought to abolish pauperism, that it is a disease to be trampled out like leprosy or like small-pox, you are not to send him to an insane hospital, but you are to rely on this infinite power, as you address yourselves to the work which so great a purpose demands. Stupendous difficulty? Yes; but, as God orders, I have stupendous power. This power, pent up and available, was given me for use. It is not meant for nothing. We will turn it on this obstacle. The obstacle shall give way. If we are sons and daughters of the Living God, going and coming with his Infinite Commission, we will do something which is worth doing.

We will do something worth doing, — that is the resolution for you and me. We do not call ourselves reformers. We do not, I suppose, regard ourselves as professed philanthropists. There are things which we should be glad to have done, which we leave for other people to do. Thus, we should be very glad to have Jerusalem taken out of the hands of the Turk. But we do not go about preaching to people to ask them to go to Jerusalem and drive the Turk out. When we ask people to take the cross and bear it, we have other objects nearer home. It is much more my business and yours to see that Boston is decently governed than

that Jerusalem is. And very likely the place that you and I have in that business may be in teaching a child to sew in the Parmenter Street Chapel, or taking a newsboy on a sleigh-ride around the Reservoir. But sewing or sleigh-ride, ward-meeting or public speech, you and I are not going to see any of the large successes, unless we ally ourselves with large plans, and unless we rely on this reserved enthusiasm which works the miracles. We shall not make people temperate by taking slates to them, and calculating that whiskey costs more than clothing. We shall make them temperate by quickening the divine fire till it blazes, by giving it new fuel that it may burn higher, by piling into it this thing or that which tempts to wrong, so that the temptations may be destroyed. This sacrifice, by the way, is what "enthusiasm" originally meant. It is what the sceptics and machine people cannot understand. But it is involved in the great principle which wins all the victories.

Thank God, and thank the enthusiasm of our fanatic fathers, we have not the problem which General Booth is facing so gallantly. Not one man, woman, or child in Boston slept last night in quarters as noisome and wretched as fifty thousand people in London were trying to sleep in at the same time. But there were bad enough places here. I can show you — any leader in the ministry at large or in the Salvation Army can show

you — places where people did sleep which it shall make you weep to see. And we have our other failures, for which no fathers have provided. Diseases running rampant, which might be trampled out. Ignorance, almost proud that it is ignorant. Labor, crowded just where it is not wanted, and wanted just where it does not come. Wealth untold, in the hands of those who are so stupid that they do not know that wealth, as wealth, is merely vulgar. Learning untold, in the brains of people who do not know that learning is only a morbid disease, unless it is shared to the last fraction with all sorts and conditions of men. Life in the midst of plenty, which does not know how to live. A country drunk with its own prosperity, which hardly knows how to use its riches, and yet, like other drunkards, staggers on and asks for more. Now, it is over such mountains, and in spite of them, that you and I, and others like us, are to carry the car of the Living God. He means that his treasures shall be scattered right and left. He means that health shall be as sure in every home as it is now in the palaces of favored princes. He means that ripe learning, and the joy of understanding his work, shall be everywhere, as certain as it is now in colleges or in libraries. He means that no man shall sulk in a miser's wretchedness, counting his gold and weighing his silver, but that that miser, most wretched of all, shall be exalted to the luxury of leading, teaching, spending, relieving, and re-

ceiving the blessings of his fellow-men. You and I, among others, are set to this business of hewing down such mountains and building up such valleys.

We shall succeed if we aim high enough. We shall fail if we accept things as they are. We shall succeed if we trust the wave of enthusiasm of those who are born from God, and try to live and move and have their being in him. We shall fail if we only find fault with other people's plans, — if we do nothing but say the work is hard to do. Certainly we shall fail if we suppose that wrong will right itself; that falsehood will teach people to tell the truth; that bribery will make man pure; or, in general, if we think it wise to let things alone. And, for ourselves, we shall be strong and confident if we seek God to help us; — for then we shall find him. We shall be faint and weak if we do not seek him, for then even his Omnipotence will find it hard to set our pulses beating. What you and I need is with each breath of life to come "Nearer, Great God, to thee," — not simply, as the hymn says so well, in any flight through space, but in these relations of life, just as intimate, of Monday morning and Tuesday afternoon. I am talking to a stranger in the street-car. Yes — and the God of Heaven is the third person in the interview. I am standing at an open grave. Yes — and the Father of perfect love holds me, so that I may not die in my wretchedness. I am before an audience

which distrusts and doubts me. Speak by my lips, Father, and compel them to understand. Or I have this child to amuse, who is fretful and overbearing. Father of my life, show me how to attend to her as wisely as you have cared for me. The man who has fairly sought for this Infinite Companionship has found it. That man has found that the lions in the way receded before him. He has not found that the gnats from the foliage, or the little ants from their burrows, or the beetles who flew across his path, really hindered him. He trod on serpents and scorpions, and they did not hurt him. He did not succeed by this method, or that method. It was not that one plan was so much wiser than another, for this was no affair of plan. It was not one or another contrivance of machinery. It was a question how Infinite Power should be brought to compel the machinery. And this man, in his unselfish enthusiasm, was the living partner of the Living God!

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Fourth Series.] [No. 130.

WHY UNITARIANS

OBSERVE

THE LORD'S SUPPER.

BY

REV. JOHN W. DAY.

AMERICAN UNITARIAN ASSOCIATION
BOSTON

THE American Unitarian Association is the working missionary organization of the Unitarian churches of America. It seeks to promote sympathy and united action among Liberal Christians, and to spread the principles which are believed by Unitarians to be essential to civil and religious liberty and progress and to the attainments of the spiritual life. To this end it supports missionaries, establishes and maintains churches, holds conventions, aids in building meeting-houses, publishes, sells, and gives away books, sermons, tracts, hymn-books, and devotional works.

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WHY UNITARIANS OBSERVE THE LORD'S SUPPER.

This do in remembrance of me. — Luke xxii. 19.

It is a very common thing to hear the question which I have several times been asked of late, "Why do Unitarians observe the service of the Lord's Supper?" It is quite likely that to answer such question in a sermon will seem to some of you a needless repetition of familiar statements. It would be easy to use such a theme in a very dry and profitless way. But it has seemed to me that to meet common questions ought to be one part of the preacher's work, and that in the desire to find fresh subjects and novelty of discourse preachers leave some of the most important subjects untouched. My own hesitation to preach upon this subject yielded to this one consideration: the few questions one hears are likely to indicate many similar questions one does not hear, and perhaps there is no safer guide to what is interesting than the interest one actually sees shown. It is possible also that persons to whom all that can be said is familiar may be helped to make more use of their opinions and to make them as clear and positive to others. So long as there is no sectarian purpose, it is perfectly proper to explain a much misunderstood position in a plain and candid way.

The first thing to notice is the different points of view from which this question is asked. Some people ask it in such a way as to show that they think Unitarians have no right to celebrate the communion. The service has

been so long associated in their minds with the deity of Jesus that they forget how it ever meant, or ever can mean, anything else; and therefore they think a belief in the complete humanity of Jesus is inconsistent with the service of the Lord's Supper. Other persons ask the question from quite the opposite point of view. They do not themselves approve of the service. They do not care for its symbolism or adopt its discipleship, and their view of Jesus and relation to him makes such a service seem insincere. To them also the service is so inseparably bound up with beliefs they do not accept, that observing one seems a sanction of the other. A third class of people ask simply for information without implying either kind of objection. Noticing wide variations among Christian churches in their requirements and interpretations, such inquirers wish to know just where to put this denomination among the others. As there may be questioners here of all these three kinds, I shall keep in mind, first, those whom I suppose to ask for information, and those who do not grant us the right they feel that they possess to observe this custom. Afterward a word may be said to those who do not themselves approve of the service, and for that reason question the propriety of our continuing it.

At the outset I want to remind you of one fact that is generally ignored. Unitarians are by no means peculiar in being charged with inconsistency in this matter. We are spoken to as if we stood alone on the defensive. But we do not stand alone. The whole Protestant body of churches stands under the same indictment. The Roman Church might say to them: "How is it that you observe the Lord's Supper? We do not think you believe in it. You do not accept literally the words, 'This is my body,' 'This is my blood,' as we accept them, literally. You do not believe that the bread is the body of Christ according

to the Scripture. How, then, can you join in a service in which these words have a central place?" Moreover, the largest portion of Christendom to-day believes in transubstantiation and in the power of the priest, derived from Christ through the apostles, to make the sacrament an actual participation of the believer with the sacrifice of Christ. If any authority can deny the right of others to share this service, the Roman Church has that authority. It does so. But do all others on that account accept its verdict? Do they accept the defensive attitude in which they, too, are placed? Because the great majority and the voice of weighty authority question the propriety of a celebration of the Lord's Supper by members of Protestant churches, is that considered by Protestants a reproach and a denial? Not at all. They insist on their right to observe the Lord's Supper on their own grounds, according to their own interpretation of it. Why, therefore, should they turn upon others the weapon whose point is blunt against themselves? Why should their question to us be any more considered a reproach than is the Romanist's question to them? Does it not throw them back on precisely the ground we occupy, — the right of each body of Christians to judge for itself?

And see one thing more. This is true not only when you look at the great division of the Protestant churches from the mother church, but it is just as true of the divisions between Protestants themselves. When Luther was disputing with the Swiss reformer Zwingli, who opposed his literal interpretation of the words, "This is my body," he wrote on the table the words, "*Hoc est corpus meum*," and held by that assertion against all that his disputant could say. There was essentially the same fight between them which each had with the Roman Church. Luther denied the right of others to a freedom which against the parent church he had claimed

for himself. So it is still. One great representative Christian denomination, which has been most distinctly committed to the principle of religious liberty, and whose famous leader, Roger Williams, the first to found a Baptist church in this country, stood out for that principle against Puritan intolerance, does itself nevertheless exclude from the celebration of the Lord's Supper all who have not been baptized by immersion. Do other denominations feel that they are put on the defensive? No; they simply adopt the service on their own basis of belief. If they are asked: "How can you observe this symbolism when you do not adopt the mode of baptism we think is indicated in the gospels?" they reply: "We observe the ceremony for other reasons," and they explain why those reasons seem to them sufficient. This is precisely what we do, and the knowledge of this common ground ought to lead those who question us to do so without prejudice, and to accept our explanation in good faith.

Unitarians who observe the Lord's Supper do so because they think it is a symbolism, and not a sacrament in the common understanding of that word. The service expresses to them the sacrifice of Jesus as it is a pattern to all men. Not accepting the doctrine of the atonement in its usual form, they do accept fully the actual service of Jesus Christ in the cause of truth and humanity. He gave up his life that God's will might be done; and the solemn expression of his self-surrender and of our gratitude, in the symbols of the Lord's Supper, engage the devout heart and incline the will more earnestly to fulfil in life now the spirit of obedience and unselfishness with which Christ both lived and gave up his life. That is the first reason: We believe this symbolism of Christ's sacrifice helps those who use it to be less selfish.

A second reason why we observe the communion service is the reason that lies in the words Jesus himself used. "This do," he said, "in remembrance of me." There was nothing in this injunction to hinder us from doing likewise. It can readily be taken by any one who desires to do so. He made no fixed and arbitrary definition. He did not say that no one but those particular disciples and their direct successors might share that supper. There is nothing to show that he designed a formal institution or was thinking of limiting the acts of future generations. On the contrary, he took a common custom in which they had been sharers together, and asked that in his absence they would think of him, and see in that custom a new meaning. As the disciples observed it, — with whatever doctrine of sacrifice they held, — it was in the main simply a natural commemoration of their master. That last supper so impressed itself upon them that it became something new in their memory. It was filled with the tender recollection which sorrow had deepened and which faith had heightened. To repeat it helped them to remember him and brought him near. This was the central thing at first, and all through added meanings this has remained the chief meaning.

In taking this meaning we do but reach through other interpretations to the oldest, the most natural, the most central interpretation. In doing this we come closest to the hand of Jesus. For this was his express reason for asking his disciples to connect his memory with the sacred feast. He wished them to remember him. We wish to remember him. No other kind of faith could make him dearer to us than he is.

A third reason justifying us in observing the communion service is the very fact which is frequently urged as an objection. It is because we believe that the divine-

ness of Jesus is proved, by the central and most credible portions of the gospels, to have been expressed in that form only in which it is capable of being found in a man. New Testament scholarship without regard to denominational opinions is steadily tending in this direction. The divineness of Jesus is too precious to us to be based on shifting grounds which learning is already proving untenable. It does not depend on proving peculiar birth or an unhuman career. The divineness of Jesus is indicated to us in his life, in his character, and in his influence upon the world. Through his complete humanity, which has always been insisted on in Christian doctrine, but not thoroughly stated, we feel him to be most divine. His influence with us is therefore stronger because he is not separated in nature. This is his unique place to us. He is the one human exemplar who by universal consent among all his followers is above them all in human realization of himself and of God. None of those whose definitions seem to give him higher rank regard him with a deeper reverence and love than we feel who do not use those definitions. And to us such definitions hinder that closeness of communion which the Lord's Supper celebrates and assists. Because he is human we love all the more to commemorate him, and bless God for that life which makes divineness more real to us and more hopeful to us.

These three reasons I offer in explanation to those who ask for information and to those who think they alone have a right to celebrate the Lord's Supper. The first is that the service means and expresses in a beautiful symbolism that duty of loving self-consecration which Jesus fulfilled; the second is, that it is a service of remembrance, and differences of doctrine about Christ's nature have little to do with his injunction, "This do in remembrance of me;" the third is that we believe in his

human nature and are in that belief brought most closely into sympathy with the life of God in him, being most effectively persuaded thereby that the life of God can be made our own.

When I think of those who do not approve of this service, and because they do not themselves join in it think that others ought not to do so, I realize that there is a question not so easy to answer. I have tried to show why Unitarians do observe the communion service. It is another matter to explain why they do not. I admit that I do not know. No reason I have heard has seemed to me sufficient for rejecting this service, which has gathered to itself the sanctity of ages and the reverence of humanity. Not even the name of Emerson has lent any permanent persuasion to this abandonment. The perversions of its original simplicity may drop away, the outlived dogmas one may easily abandon. But the beauty of its symbolism, the tender associations that cluster about it, the lessons it conveys which no words can teach, the supreme figure whose humanity is our comfort, and whose spirit makes God surer than argument, —these are everlasting, no doubt can touch them, and so long as the heart of man has its rights this service will be maintained.

There is no belief that can properly be called Unitarian which is not perfectly consonant with the sincere observance of the Lord's Supper. I know, however, that individual feeling is the final test, and that feelings differ. I believe that personal reasons are often above criticism. In such a matter there should be no exhortation, no implied reproach, no fervent appeals. Those who love this service should be the last to make reflections upon others who do not care for it. It is quite probable that the rejection by some persons has more reverence at its root than the acceptance by others. It is more than likely that the Holy Supper is kept as devoutly

in the sacrifices of many who do not share its symbols as by any who have ever partaken of them. So in trying to justify this service to the third class of objectors I have named, — those who ask why it should be observed because they themselves do not observe it, — I advance no argument and make no claim. I would that I could persuade many such persons to love that which they for various reasons decline. But love does not come by persuasion, and it is better that it does not. Where two or three are gathered together In His Name because, and only because, they wish to do so, he is more likely to be present than where many are gathered together merely because they have been urged to do so. The only proper answer to such questioners is a personal experience. Not, why you should do this, but why I do it, is what one should show.

And if you should thus be taken into the confidence of those who celebrate the Lord's Supper, I think many of them would say that its value to them is the very practical value of refreshing in their affection and will the power to live better lives. It has helped them to bear their sorrows more patiently. It has helped them to put down their fears; it has made them more ashamed of their faults; it has cleansed their minds of evil, and it has awakened their better nature within them. Our best friends do this for us whenever we meet them. If we are gloomy, their cheer is catching; if a bitter mood has vexed us, their calmness dissolves the cloud; if we are angry, their gentleness softens us; if we are discouraged, their vigor heartens us; if we are trivial, their seriousness sobers us; if we have forgotten love, their love reclaims us. Whatever is real gets the best of these evil spirits of a lower self that is not our own. People do this to each other, according to their several virtues,

all the time. There are many Davids who go about the world, and many a Saul with an evil spirit upon him blesses the power which in a touch of their harp or the sound of their voice has made him well again. It is only little Pippa who passes, and guilty souls see their sin to abhor it as they hear her song, and a thousand casual hearers echo her faith that God 's in his heaven and all 's right with the world.

I can only tell you that it is so with this hallowing service, which recalls to us the purity, the nobleness, the obedience, the love, the indescribable perfectness of Christ. Each season of concentrated meditation upon him has a cleansing grace within the soul. We cannot be vindictive about our enemies when we take the symbols of his unvexed endurance. We cannot be proud of our faults when we remember his humility. We cannot be gloomy in our sorrow when we remember in what spirit he shared that last meal. We cannot justify our selfishness when we hear the words: "This do in remembrance of Christ." We cannot deceive ourselves while we put our poor lives beside his. We cannot be hard and unresponsive when we hold his heart against our own till they grow tender at the touch. We may doubt and be perplexed, but when the doubter thinks of him, he cries: —

> "Thou Christ, my soul is hurt and bruised!
> With words the scholars wear me out;
> My brain o'erwearied and confused, —
> Thee and myself and all I doubt.
>
> "And must I back to darkness go
> Because I cannot say their creed?
> I know not what I think; I know
> Only that thou art what I need."

The person of Christ is, then, not that wonderful man who lived and died in Palestine, it is the Beatitudes

speaking to us as he spoke them, it is the presence of his spirit, it is a living example closer to us than breathing and nearer than hands and feet. That life was lived. It lives again. Enter into it but for a moment, and it is as though you have stepped from the dust and dirt of the world up to the clear air of a high mountain. The oftener and the deeper you breathe such air, the more healthfully you will live. There is nothing magical or unreal about it. You know that, when you go back and find your faults waiting to be friends again. You know better than any one how inconsistent your selfishness is with the spirit of Christ you invoke. Who that knows human nature could expect anything else? One evidence of progress will be the darker contrast between your life and this Christ-life you look for. But the one moment's fact is worth a whole life's contradiction, for it is such fact alone that can live down such contradiction and spread a moment's heaven into the general life. It is those visits to the mountain-top, it is those breathings of pure air, that will arrest the decay of sin and put permanent vigor in the soul. Christ is the health of man. If there is any suggestion, any reminder, any impression, any act, any thought, which can make his life for a moment yours, which has made his life many times the possession of others, you will think it no slight good for the world to cherish that mediation. Such has been the ministry of this unspoken parable to the world, and to cherish it will be the privilege of men to the end of time.

Fourth Series.] [No. 131.

WHAT THINK YE OF CHRIST?

BY

REV. EDWARD EVERETT HALE, D.D.

AMERICAN UNITARIAN ASSOCIATION

BOSTON

Our Faith.

The Fatherhood of God.
The Brotherhood of Man.
The Leadership of Jesus.
Salvation by Character.
The Progress of Mankind,
onward and upward forever.

Typical Covenant of a Unitarian Church.

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WHAT THINK YE OF CHRIST?

"What think ye of the Christ? whose son is he?"
MATTHEW xxii. 42.

THE first half of this text was selected by Father Ignatius for his discourse, when he preached in this pulpit three weeks since. With that curious indifference to historical accuracy which seems to stamp enthusiasts, he omitted the last half of the text, and made no illusion to the incident described. This was a pity. For, as he wanted to interest us in the real history of Jesus, it would have seemed natural to tell us why Jesus asked the question of the text on this occasion, when he never asked it of the same people on any other occasion. For the subject Father Ignatius was discussing, it is a very curious observation that the Saviour himself was so indifferent as to men's questions or thoughts about him. He once asked his apostles what the multitude thought about him. On this occasion he does not even speak of himself. He asks a general question as to the Messiah whom all expected. Whose son shall the Messiah be? Must he be David's son? "Whose son is he, — the son of David or the son of God?" For the rest he said squarely, "It is my Father who does

the works. It is the Holy Spirit who speaks the word. If any man blasphemes me, he may be forgiven." He even chides his disciples because they can do nothing without him. He sinks his own personality. As Paul says so well, "He makes himself of no reputation. He takes upon himself the form of a servant." You might say he is quite indifferent how men define his nature or his position if only they will follow him.

You might say he is absolutely indifferent to this question, "What think ye of Christ?" which we are now told is the most important question of all. If you read the four Gospels for the first time, and merely addressed yourself to the question of what he did think important, you would say at once that his whole heart and soul were put on bringing in the kingdom of God.

There is, as I said, one and only one central passage where he gave to us his own statement. Curiously enough, again, this passage is now coolly rejected by those who are most eager to extol his authority. When they were all driven out of Galilee, when they had taken refuge in a foreign dominion, he asked the twelve who they thought he was. Simon Peter promptly answered, "Thou art the Christ, the son of the living God." Jesus praised him for the answer; he said he would build his Church on that answer, — that that answer should be sufficient for the foundation of the Church, and that on a

church so built hell would have no power. "Thou art the Christ, the son of the living God."

How extraordinary it is, if Peter made the wrong reply, — as we are now told he did, — if Peter should have said, "Thou art the living God," as the creeds of the fifth century would have him say! How extraordinary that this central occasion should have been lost, nay, should have been worse than lost! How extraordinary that Peter should say Jesus was the son of God, if he were God himself! This failure can only be accounted for on the ground which our friend Dr. Huntington takes, the Bishop of Syracuse, when he says that Peter did not himself then know who the Saviour was, and only found out after the Saviour had died.

As to our text itself, it is only interesting in what I may almost call the dramatic sequence of events; because it illustrates the Saviour's steady determination to put down, even by ridicule, that Jewish prejudice which made out the children of Abraham to be the only people in the world worth thinking of. I have read the whole passage, as Father Ignatius did not, that you might see this determination of his, and how important it is that the two parts of this text shall be kept together. Here was this Jewish superstition, that when God chose to send his messenger, when the Christ should come, he must be of the line of David. The same superstition shows itself in those long genealogies

with which the Gospels of Matthew and of Luke begin, in which, by different lines, Christ's birth is traced back to David, to show that he fulfilled the Jewish condition. But the Saviour himself shows indifference to this tradition. When they say at once that the Christ must be the son of David, he says in reply, "Why, David calls him 'Lord.' David admits that he himself is inferior to any one who comes direct from God. And do you mean that David requires a genealogical descent from himself of one who is to be the King of kings, and Lord of lords?" The incident is only one of many on which he presses hard upon that provincialism of the Jews. "God is able of these stones to raise up children unto Abraham." "The publicans and the harlots shall go into the kingdom of heaven before you." Yes, the Gentiles, who are like beggars out in the highway, they shall be received at the feast when the children of Abraham are left out. Such are the parables and such the epigrams by which this local provincialism is rebuked. And what is offered on the other side? The grandeur of a true-born son of God. The light and life and glory and victory which will certainly come when a child of God partakes of the divine nature, as we all may, enters into the life of God, is inspired by the Holy Spirit, and works the miracles, therefore, which the Holy Spirit may command. There is one and another curious phrase, to show how broadly Jesus interprets this title of "son," and how much he

means by the central word "father." In another interview in this same temple, he quotes from the 82d Psalm the words in which those are called gods to whom the word of God came, — "Is it not written in your law, I said, ye are gods?" And then he puts squarely the question, which neither Father Ignatius nor any of his school ever condescends to answer, "If he called them gods unto whom the word of God came (and the Scripture cannot be broken), say ye of him whom the Father sanctified and sent into the world, Thou blasphemest, because I said I am the son of God?" If God is our father, we are all God's sons or God's daughters. And then, as the centre of expostulation and entreaty, he begs us to recognize the greatness of this calling, to be true to the spirit which inspires us, and as princes of the blood royal to live in the Father's house, and to go about the Father's business. Not unwilling to take the fond phrases, in which, with more or less distinctness, old prophets have spoken of the Messiah, he is willing to accept such terms as "First-born," "First-begotten," "Best beloved;" but always there is the determination that we shall understand that where there is a first-born son, there are other children, and that he opens for us the inheritance which he begs us all to claim.

What think ye of the Christ, then? The gospel answer to this question is, that the Christ is the Son of God.

Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God, is indeed the motto for the corner-stone of the church, as he said it was.

And any effort to make it out that more was concealed behind this phrase than it expresses, is an effort which re-acts against him who makes it. The Church herself stopped dead in her amazing advance of the early centuries. She failed in her real duty, and sunk back into an "establishment" just so soon as she began to worship him. Then it was that she turned away from the work which he assigned to her, which was to bring in the Kingdom of God.

"I am your master," he said. Yes. "You are to follow me, and I am your leader." Yes. "But you are to seek the Spirit of God to enliven you and give you strength. And, in fact, I go away that that Spirit may more surely possess you." Nay, his word is so strong as this, "If I do not go away, the Comforter will not come to you."

So careful is he to efface himself from the worship of the church. He brings the wandering child to the Father's feet, and then goes away, that he may leave him there.

I. There are thirty different texts in which the Saviour more or less distinctly defines Christian discipleship. Such is the statement to Nicodemus, the earliest of them: "Except a man be born again he cannot see the Kingdom of God." I need not read them. It will be a better exercise

for you to copy them from your own Bibles yourselves. In those thirty texts he speaks three times of their believing on him. In all of them he speaks as to those who love him enough to believe him and to follow him. But in not one of them does he lay the least stress on any intellectual process. In not one of them does he open the question as to what they think of him, or what honor they shall pay to him. He offered himself as our Master, and left us his unfinished work. He says to us, "If you obey me, you will follow me." He proved his affection in his death. And he says, "If you believe in me, you will love me." He means that we shall unite in such love, and he says: "If you love me, you will love each other." In all these statements he speaks as one who would bring in the Kingdom of the Living God. Of himself he says almost nothing. But when he does speak, it is to say that he represents that Living God as his anointed and well-beloved Son.

II. When you come, in the Testament, to the apostles' definition of Christianity you find the same statement. They are building on the foundation. The foundation is: "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God." They are never tempted, right hand or left hand, to make any other statement. They baptize into the name of Jesus the Christ, Jesus the Saviour. They make no pretence that this Jesus is very God of

very God. Their one central thought is the building up a church of God's children; of the sons of God and of his daughters.

To these sons and daughters they say, "Here is God, God is near: enter his Kingdom." To bind them together, they baptize them in the name of Jesus Christ, the first begotten of their company, the best beloved Son of God, who has called them from darkness into light. And they call upon each and all to receive, as he received, the present Spirit of God, to live in that Spirit, to walk in that Spirit, to go and to come as themselves, God's children. "Walk worthy of the *calling* with which ye are called," as that Son of God walked, who died that you might come into your Father's home, and he into yours.

III. What the church thought of Christ, in the first centuries after the apostles, has appeared very distinctly in late years, in the discovery of the early Catechism, to which the name of the twelve apostles was given. It was the Catechism taught to new converts before they received the supper. Its language at the supper, for instance, shows that that was then a simple service of thanksgiving: —

"Concerning the Eucharist, thus give thanks; first concerning the cup: We thank thee, our Father, for the holy wine of David thy servant, which thou hast made known to us through Jesus thy servant; to thee be the glory forever. And

concerning the broken bread: We thank thee, our Father, for the life and knowledge which thou hast made known to us through Jesus thy servant; to thee be the glory forever." All worship, all prayers, are addressed to the Father. Jesus is his servant, whom he has sent as a teacher. He is as he was in Peter's word, "The son of the living God." It is on this rock that the church of that day knew that it was standing.

And so long as they sought what he sought, — to bring in the Kingdom of God, — the church triumphed, with a sway which no philosophy understood, and which no martyrdom set backward. But then, alas! that came which he foresaw. Ah! it is so much easier to worship him than to follow him. "Many will say 'Lord, Lord,' who do not the things that I say." While the church was willing to do the things he said, though it was the communion of the poor and the ignorant, of the weak and foolish, it triumphed. In those days it had no name for him other than his own, none but the anointed of God, brother of our brotherhood, first heir of inheritance, Son of God, well beloved, first-born, Master, and Lord. But it was not so easy to do as one would be done by; it was not so easy to feed the poor and to welcome the leper; it was not so easy to live in the brotherhood of humanity. It was a great deal easier to fall down and worship him, as he had never asked them to do; vastly easier to call him very God of

very God, as he never said he was; easier to say he made the worlds, as he did not. Weary of that harder service, weary of the way of thorns, the church made its compact with the world. And from that day to this day, its formal creeds have thrown upon him the burden of the sins of mankind, and have given to him the homage which he gave to his Father.

IV. Yet he was never left without a witness. Central in all testimonies were the four Gospels, which would not change. Steadily they say that he is the Anointed — the Son of the living God. There was the confessed refusal of all Palestine, where he lived and died, to give him any other name, whether men were his followers or no. There were such simple Christians as those in the valleys of the Alps, who would never say that the Son was the Father, and did not know what was meant when men said it.

More and more, as Galileo's tube opened the sky, as this world took its proper little place in the universe, as it showed itself, a little speck of dust floating in space, by the same law which ruled planets, suns, and constellations; more and more did men ask themselves what the creed of the church meant when it said that Jesus of Nazareth made all the worlds; or what it meant when it said that the very God of the universe even, left the universe to stand on the deck of a fishing-boat at Capernaum. More and more the

devout thought of the world went back to the simple statement of the four Gospels, and recognized and found its Saviour, as never before, when it accepted him again as the well-beloved Son of the Living God, commissioned and anointed to bring in the Kingdom of God.

This is the statement of his work and his position which will stand, because it is his own statement. For us, our place is gratitude and loyalty. "What is that to thee?" he said to Peter once, when Peter stepped too far in a question, — "what is that to thee? Follow thou me."

And that is what he would say to us if we could put to him some of our speculative questions, — these conundrums which the theologians hand about so glibly, — "What is that to thee? Follow thou me." Whoever will take the Saviour of men, in his work of saving them from their sins, whoever will try the great experiment of prayer, and the other experiment of sacrifice, as this Leader of men bids him try one and the other, comes to the certainty that here is a Leader who knows how to lead, who knows what he is talking about, and who shows the way. Whoever follows, though with trembling foot and fickle faith, follows each day more hopefully and strongly, and knows that this is no finite guess that he is working on; he knows that he has God's law for the affairs of men; this time he is sure of his Leader. This Leader is from God, commissioned

by him, inspired by him, and sustained by him. He who follows that Leader, comes to believe that Leader, and to live in his Life. As the Saviour prays, he prays. As the Saviour trusts, he trusts. As the Saviour listens, he listens. He comes to know that the living God, the living Power of the Universe, loves and strengthens every child of earth. They are his children, partakers of his nature, and alive with his life. Such a child of God, who has followed to such purpose the Son of God well-beloved, dares the great experiment of the Holy Spirit. He lives in God, he moves in God, in God he has his being. He plunges into life, knowing that the living God will sustain him and carry him through. He believes the Master's words, "Lo, I am not alone, for my Father is with me."

"God does not hate me. He loves me." This is the cry of such a disciple. "God does not punish me. He forgives me. God does not forget me as he goes about in his universe. He is here — to-day — this minute. And I — I am not in the darkness. I am in his Light. I am not alone. I am with him. I am not weak. I am in his arms. For I am his child — born of him — as I shall return to him. My life is not of to-day, not of to-morrow, but is forever; it is as the life of God." This is the joy of life — to come to this certainty. And the disciple who is so glad, the disciple who is so certain, cannot find hymn or

psalm joyous enough to express his exultation; he cannot frame the word which expresses his gratitude. What can he do but follow loyally, lovingly, heartily, the Leader who has led him, the Teacher who has taught him, the Saviour who has saved him, the Brother who has blessed him. He finds the way of life. He looks, and lo! an Open Door. Thou art indeed the Christ, the Son of the living God.

THE American Unitarian Association is the working missionary organization of the Unitarian churches of America. It seeks to promote sympathy and united action among Liberal Christians, and to spread the principles which are believed by Unitarians to be essential to civil and religious liberty and progress and to the attainments of the spiritual life. To this end it supports missionaries, establishes and maintains churches, holds conventions, aids in building meeting-houses, publishes, sells, and gives away books, sermons, tracts, hymn-books, and devotional works.

Tracts descriptive of Unitarian principles, doctrines, and methods, are sent free to any who desire to know what Liberal Christianity stands for and works for. A list of these free tracts will be sent on application. A full descriptive catalogue of the publications of the Association, including doctrinal, devotional, and practical works, will be sent to all who apply. All religious books by Unitarian authors are kept on sale, and will be sent on receipt of price. A list of such books, with prices, will be furnished upon request.

The Association is supported by the voluntary contributions of churches and individuals. Annual subscriptions of any amount are solicited. Address communications and contributions to the Secretary at his office, 25 Beacon Street, Boston, Mass. The following is the simple

FORM OF BEQUEST.

I give and bequeath to the American Unitarian Association, a corporation established by law in the State of Massachusetts, the sum of.....dollars.

FOURTH SERIES.] [No. 132.

THE

RELIGIOUS GAINS

OF THE

NINETEENTH CENTURY.

BY

REV. W. H. LYON, D.D.

AMERICAN UNITARIAN ASSOCIATION

BOSTON

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THE RELIGIOUS GAINS OF THE NINETEENTH CENTURY.

Of religion in general it is enough to say that, in spite of all that is said of the decline of church attendance, and granting that for a time there seems to be a slackening in the tide of religious earnestness, we shall not be dismayed if we compare our generation with the end of the eighteenth century, still less if we look back half a century farther, still less again if we continue on to the opening of that century. The state of the churches, both in this country and in England, if we may trust the election sermons and other testimonies, was something far worse than anything we have to regret to-day. Hardly had our fathers become fairly settled on these shores, when the cry of a dying faith and a backsliding people rose continually on the frosty air. In England it was a common saying that no one who pretended to social rank went to church, that the educated classes had ceased to care for it, and that it was doomed to die as intelligence increased. The church buildings were in decay, the clergy idle, careless, and often vicious, and the services lifeless and formal. It may be that we are on the way to this condition, but we are far from it now.

The fact is that a change has been going on in the ideas and ways of men ever since the Reformation. So great a revolution as that does not confine its effects to

a single generation. Catherine von Bora, Luther's nun-wife, had not been married to him long before she confided to him her uneasiness because she had ceased to be as fond of prayers and penances as she had been. A new idea of divine service has been slowly growing upon the human mind, and it has been learning more and more plainly the meaning of the saying of Saint James: "True religion and undefiled before God the Father is this, to visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction and to keep one's self unspotted from the world." Take along with this the slow unfolding of the meaning of the right of private judgment, and the return of the centre of gravity from the Church to the individual soul, and you have abundant explanation, both for whatever decline there may have been in church attendance and for the undiminished sincerity, honor, kindliness, and conscientiousness of men in general. The old story of the Indian who was found wandering in the woods and was asked if he was lost has a point for us: "No," said he, "Indian not lost. Wigwam lost. Indian here." The man is here. He may be losing his church, but not himself. When he needs a church, or comes to realize that he needs one, he will find one or make one.

In this direction I should like to marshal a few points which religion has gained during the last century, if not the Church. For there is a clinging suspicion in many minds that the advance of science has undermined religion. This has been distinctively a century of physical science, — that is to say, of the understanding of the world of matter. It would be a singular thing if the knowledge of God's world should lead to the neglect of God's worship. Let us take a few of the great scientific doctrines of the century and see whether they injure or further the worship of God.

First, let us take that most delicate of discoveries, the conservation of energy. If you hammer a piece of iron until it grows warm, you do not bring out latent heat, as our fathers thought. The heat is the force of your arm taking on a new form. If you continue striking till the iron is red-hot, the light that radiates from it is the muscular energy in still another disguise. If that heat be properly treated, an electric or magnetic current can be induced, which, again, is but the force of your arm undergoing another transformation. So it is proved beyond power of denial that all the forces that play about us or in us, from the lightning over our heads to the pulses in our wrists, are but modifications of one energy. The wind and the sunshine, the upward push of the growing grass and the downward pull of the rock, the strength with which we walk and the moving of an eyelash, the swing of the tides and the mighty rush of the globe through space, — are all but forms of motion of the one unceasing and persistent energy.

We are not, then, assailed by a hundred independent and chaotic powers, rushing blindly about, each on its own business; we are in the hands of one omnipresent force, acting under law, following lines of cause and effect as the train follows the track laid down for it, and incomprehensible to us, like the trains that issue from a great station, only because we do not understand the system. To be sure, the effect upon us physically is the same as if they were independent of each other, since each has to be dealt with by itself; but the effect upon the mind is not the same. For, whereas we must have thought that we were in a world of blind forces, every one on his own wild and heedless course, — a world, that is, of chance, now we know that all force is one, and that one a force guided by intelligence. We can translate its laws into terms of our own thought. Therefore

in it or behind it lies a mind akin, though superior, to ours. So far, then, has this threatening science told us what we are glad to know, that, whatever be the end toward which the world is moving, it is guided, and at the helm stands one mighty force, — not a quarrelling, jostling crew of rebellious powers, but one almighty, omnipresent energy. So far, then, our century has revealed God to us. It has granted us the vision of Moses, who asked that he might see the glory of Jehovah. God did not show himself in full, but only on one side. No revelation has been made to the nineteenth century of God in his fulness, but as the one God we know him as reason never knew him before.

Then the century has brought another contribution to our thought of God. I need not tell over again that familiar fairy tale of how the rays of sunshine came down one day through the prism which a canny scientist had set, and wrote upon a screen in telegraphic tokens of lines grouped in curious ways a message from heaven. The message seemed very prosaic, — only that iron or copper or gold was burning in the sun, — yet its bearing upon our knowledge of the universe was startling and joyful; for it told us that the same material was up there that is down here, and that the same laws of light and heat were at work in that mighty celestial furnace as here in our foundries and on our hearths. But it is its bearing upon our religion that makes us most thankful for that weird and silent message. The power that is one upon the earth is, then, one with the power that rules the heavens. Our God is not only one, but omnipresent. He is no delegate for a far-off chief, following his own caprice in his own province. It is God himself, if not from everlasting to everlasting, then from immensity to immensity, one and the same. So another grand song of faith is illustrated for us: —

"Whither shall I go from thy spirit,
Or whither shall I flee from thy presence?
If I ascend up into Heaven, thou art there,
If I make my bed in the grave, behold thou art there."

Again, the grandest idea that ever came to the mind of man, outside of religion, is that of evolution. It does not touch merely those matters which concern the scientist, but those which fill our common day, and not only the generation of celestial worlds, but the smallest facts of family or individual life. It is a philosophy of all life, and none of us, however we may doubt or remain ignorant of it, can escape from its working. It seemed to come as an enemy to religion, and the defenders of the Church were at first very reluctant to receive it into the company of established truths. But there is nothing more striking in the history of thought since the advent of Christianity itself than the way in which this sublime doctrine conquered the prejudices and gained the assent of thinking men. To-day there is not a man eminent in the study of science or philosophy that doubts it, and its greatest champion lies buried in Westminster Abbey. Theology is a good fighter, but she is generous when she is conquered. She has great interests to guard, and whoever seeks sanctuary in her temple must take the trouble to prove his right to enter. She was sincere in her opposition to the theory of evolution. At first sight it seemed to take God out of the world and give it over to the blind turmoil of chance. Theology was not a whit more bitter or obstinate in her fight against the new doctrine than science was. Conservatism and caution are not merely religious virtues, but human. It is very true, as Professor Huxley grimly said, that extinct theologians lie about the cradle of science like the strangled serpents about the cradle of the infant Hercules; but he should have added that among the extinct

theologians lie many men of science quite as thoroughly silenced, and deserving to be quite as much ashamed of themselves. Professor Huxley's letters exhibit that pugnacious scientist in the act of strangling biologists as well as bishops, and the language which he uses toward the bigotry and blindness of his opponents is quite as emphatic and strenuous toward those of the laboratory as toward those of the sanctuary. But as the scientist at last saw the light, so did the theologian; and to-day we are all agreed that the doctrine of evolution has done more to put God into the world before the eyes of the people than to take him out. Let us look at it a moment, and see what the century has given to religion in this great discovery. The doctrine of evolution is simply that the world is not built like a house, by the addition of one part to another mechanically, but grows like a tree from a life within. Now, the growth of a tree is, in the first place, beautiful. It is one of the great charms of spring to see the tender leaves sprout and the whole sphere become alive with foliage dancing in the sunshine. The leaves are not fastened on as an artificial spray of flowers is made by the milliner, with visible effort and contrivance, but slowly take shape, without noise or struggle. So grew the vast organism of the world. We sometimes think of creation as a huge labor, in the midst of which we see vaguely the form of God. Poetry perpetuates what once was the sober thought of reason, — speaks of God as forming the earth in the hollow of his hand, and calls the shining heavens "a spangled frame." The idea is that of construction, as a carpenter frames a house. Yet we know the creation is still going on, and the forces that worked in the beginning are working before our eyes now. The same gradual and noiseless work of sunlight and streams, with now and then great impatient upheavals and contractions, such as we still

have in some degree, — that is and always has been creation. It is growth, quiet transformation and increase. There have been many features that seem harsh and even cruel to individual lives, but the process is growth and the end is blessing. Looking at it as a whole, we see beauty and grandeur, the quiet exercise of mighty energy.

But what is this mighty energy that produces this beautiful transformation? We have seen what it is. It is one and omnipresent, — none other than God. The religious man who had been in the habit of thinking the divine presence confined to certain places and activities began to say with Jacob, "Surely God was in this place and I knew it not." A great broadening of the idea of God came into the human mind, — a larger idea than it could at once accommodate, one to which it must grow, but which is to be the foundation of all religious life. It had already come to know God as one and omnipresent. It was now to know him as the indwelling life.

The grand figure of God seated upon a throne in the heavens, looking down upon mankind, seeing all that happens, and ruling from afar, helps us to think of him as sovereign over all the earth; but it is a figure, not a literal fact. God rules from within, not from without, as the life rules the tree, not as the overseer rules his factory, and not merely within the lower creation, but in the depths of the human soul. It was only the repetition of what had been said long before, — that though the heaven and heaven of heavens could not contain him, he dwelt in the humble and contrite heart. But the idea was too majestic, too spiritual, to be taken in by all. It had to wait for the fulness of time.

It is not too much to say that as this thought of God works its way into the human mind it will transform the religious life of Christendom. It will do more to bring

to men that vivid and continuous consciousness of a present God which Jesus had than anything else which has been said since the New Testament revelations delivered their gospel. It will make the world sacred to us, saying, as the vision of Peter said, "What God hath cleansed, that call not thou common or unclean." It will accomplish that which the first Christians attempted in vain. It will make all days Sabbaths, and fill all days with the happy sense of being now the children of God.

But has the century taught us anything of the character of this one omnipresent, indwelling God? One thing at least, — that he is a patient God. The Old Testament has suffered much at the hands of its well-meaning commentators, but in nothing more than their insertion into it of the idea that the world was made about six thousand years ago. To men without history or the means of reading the fragmentary records of prehistoric times, six thousand years may have seemed an ample time for creation, but to us of later and more learned days it has seemed scarcely long enough for a beginning. Now that the best biblical scholarship of the century proves to us that the Bible assigns no length of life to the earth, the men of science and the men of historic research bring us news of the enormous period in which the work of creation has been in process. The testimony of the ancient monuments already carries us far back of the old limit, and the testimony of the rocks sends us searching into a darkness that stretches on beyond imagination. This is no hastily gathered world under our feet and over our head. The boulder which we unearth in grading our land has lived ages that make us envy its opportunities. Had it eyes and a mind and a tongue, what could it not tell us of beautiful and wonderful transformation? And man himself is already old with the

experience of incalculable centuries. "Imagination's utmost stretch in wonder dies away" when it tries to comprehend the antiquity of man, and yet behind it stretches, like the sea in the darkness of the night, the still more astounding antiquity of the globe and the universe around it.

What has this to tell religion? It tries to tell it of the patience of God. What could our fathers know of that divine long-suffering of which they read in holy writ? The "suffering" they could comprehend at least as well as we, but not the "long." How much grander to us are those solemn verses, "Lord, thou hast been our dwelling-place in all generations. Before the mountains were brought forth or ever thou hadst formed the earth and the world, even from everlasting to everlasting thou art God!" Or those majestic words of Saint Paul, "The whole creation groaneth and travaileth together in pain until now!" The divine mind has not been hasty in its work of preparing the earth for the comedy and tragedy of human life, nor in the harder task of preparing human life for that fulness of time when the Christ should come. Why the time has been so long, what obstacles stood in the way of a speedy realization of God's purpose, or what drawbacks are inherent in the materials on which he had to work, we do not know. We can know only that through all that stupendous period and amid all its difficulties He has added infinite patience to all His mercies, infinite forbearance of human follies, infinite respect for human freedom, and infinite confidence in the ultimate salvation of the humanity which He made. This quality of the divine character, at least, the century has demonstrated to us in its revelation of the antiquity of the world and of man.

I should like to add, — and, if there were time, to dwell upon the thought, — that we have learned that

God is an honest God, that, however hard He may be to comprehend, He does not deceive or mislead us. In Him is no variability nor shadow from turning. His laws always work the same way as when we first found them out, and we may rest upon a fact to be forever what it was yesterday. If this were not so, there could be no thinking and no gain from experience. All progress depends upon and is the witness to the divine faithfulness.

As to the love of God, we must not expect too much from physical science. We must look to those ranges of thought that deal with higher developments of the divine plan. As a plant is best known by its flower, not by its stem and leaves, so the character of God must be learned not so much from the world of matter as from the world of spirit.

> "The dear Lord's best interpreters
> Are humble human souls."

Above all, the love of God was made evident in the face of Jesus Christ. I have not adduced these discoveries of human reason as if they replaced the revelations of the New Testament. They have been illustrations of Christian truth; they have been variations upon the sacred theme; they have been the stones, laboriously quarried and hewn, out of which a grander temple is to be built for the old faith, in which shall minister still for us the High Priest who was touched with a sense of our infirmities.

The century has not been especially a religious century. It has been a time for subduing and developing the earth on which we live, — mastering its forces, uncovering its treasures, and spelling out its secrets. Yet it has been, as many of us believe, a time of preparation for a new religious era. One thing it has discovered,

that the greatest riches, even the greatest learning, does not necessarily bring abiding happiness. Man shall not live by bread alone; and one of the chief things, as it may turn out, for which we shall have to thank God after that wonderful nineteenth century is the deeper hunger and thirst after the God the hem of whose garments it has been touching. A profound unrest has seized upon the world. It is not at home in the splendid palace of this wonderful civilization. But the day will come when all the material and intellectual gains of this wonderful century will move into their places at the sound of a deeper faith, as the stones took position in the walls of ancient Thebes when Amphion struck his lute.

So let us thank God not merely for outward prosperity and the discoveries of science, but for the high uses for which we are destined. It may be that the kings of the West — the merchant princes, the captains of industry, and the leaders of modern thought — are gathering their treasures to lay them at last, like the kings of the East, at the feet of Christ.

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FATHER, SON, AND HOLY SPIRIT.

"Go ye forth and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them into the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit." MATTHEW xxviii. 19.

THIS baptismal formula is repeated every day of the year in thousands of Christian churches.

But I am afraid that its use is almost absolutely conventional. As one might take the stars and stripes of our flag and say that the flag is the symbol of the country, without asking why the stars are there or why the stripes are there, so I am afraid people repeat these ancient words which refer to Father, Son, and Spirit.

So I am more glad to use them, with that addition which is made to them in one of the ancient doxologies. Here the worshipper sang:

"Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit. As it was in the beginning."

As it was in the beginning.

If you and I could only repeat this formula, as if it were not a formula; if you and I could only use such words, all fresh and alive with the life with which Christ spoke them; if they were

Edward E. Hale.

words which had meaning in them, which had living sap in them, which had red blood in them, — then we could make them the war-cry of the Church or its pæan of victory. But they are neither war-cry nor pæan if they are only repeated decorously, as the requisition of a liturgy.

The trouble is, in all our use of the Gospels, that we fail to see the amazing novelty to those people of the Saviour's statement. So we do not comprehend the sudden start, the flash of light, the determination to live, shall I say, as giants or as angels, in that infinite future which is spread before us. Indeed, it is almost impossible for us to feel this; but we must try, we must use our imaginations. Here is the Saviour in the midst of all sorts of people — Pharisees, Sadducees, Samaritans, Phœnicians, Arabs, Parthians, Greeks, Romans, Egyptians, people who have had all sorts of gods, or who have had no God, one God, or many gods. Some of these gods were what we should call devils. All of them represented force and arbitrary power. They were kings or judges, perhaps they were executioners or magistrates. Everybody was afraid of them. To be afraid of them was a requisite of what was called religion. Religion, indeed, is often defined among the writers of that time as the terror of the inferior in presence of the superior. They went so far, you remember, as to say squarely that "the fear of the

Lord is the beginning of wisdom." Into the midst of the chattering of such worshippers, cold with fear and almost dumb from terror, comes Jesus Christ. And he says, "Whom are you afraid of? What are you afraid of? This Power who maintains this world, and brings you and me into being, — he is our Father. He loves us, and whenever we know him we love him. He cannot help loving us, and we cannot help loving him." When he has to say which commandment of the old law is greatest of them all, it is Moses' instruction, which they had never understood and never fulfilled, that they should love the Lord their God. And the central statement of all he has to say to them is this statement, that God loves them and does not hate them; that God loves them and does not judge them; that God commands them only because he loves them; and that because he loves them God watches over them and cares for them. Nature is really conscious, and is on our side. Now we are used to all this. To us the words "Our Father" and the word "God" have become synonymous, and they mean the same thing when we use them, just as the two words "Lord" and "God" have become synonymous. It was not so then. It was the marvel of marvels. Here is this prophet, — clearly he knows what he is talking about, — and he says nature is not cruel, but she is kind. God is not our King, but our Father. God watches us always, and though we

do not know it, his every act and thought are act and thought of love.

Of course, then, in the watchword of the new Church, in its worship, in its baptism, in its proclamation, this word comes foremost. We are not to baptize in the name of Jehovah; not even, observe, in the name of God. We are to show the great reality which we stand for, which lifts our worship above and beyond that of all partial religions. We are to show that it is our Father to whom we come.

Now, who are we who worship? Who are we who proclaim? Who are we who baptize? Who are we who go up and down the world proclaiming these glad tidings? Are we worms of the dust?

No!

Are we so many shell-fish, lying hidden in the sand, over whom there sweep regularly by a fixed order certain ocean tides, which then sweep back again and leave us with no wills of our own, — only to drink in this or that from sunshine or from air?

No!

Are we a set of machines, carefully constructed, with so many bones, so many nerves, so many muscles and sinews, so much blood, so much cartilage, worked by a stationary battery called a brain, which will run fourscore years and then stop running?

No!

In no accurate sense are we the mere creatures of this Father. We are much more. We share his nature. We partake his life. We are his sons and his daughters. His life is our life. His being is our being. His nature is our nature. Let no man say hereafter that this language is too bold, that no man born of woman has shown such love as God shows, such tenderness as God shows, such justice as he shows, which is mercy. No man shall say this who remembers the son of Mary. The revelation which the son of Mary has made to all his brothers and sisters of mankind is, first, that the God of Nature is their Father; and, second, that in the most real and simple use of words, they are his sons as Jesus Christ is — and they are his daughters. So the new Church, when it states its watchword in an epigram, states this reality with the other. Absolute religion is the religion of the Father and his children. It is the religion of the Father and of the Son. It is the religion of the Father and of all his sons and daughters.

It proved convenient afterward for a church of priests to confine its reverence to that first-born Son as he is called. But the Saviour made no such restriction. "Ye shall do greater things than I," he said to his own. He bade all his brethren address "Our Father." First and last, his appeal to them and to us is to those who can

claim all his privileges and hold his communion with God; as when at the end he says:

"I ascend to my Father and your Father, to my God and your God."

We are not to come to him in our prayer. We are to pray as he prayed, to his Father and to ours.

"But these things are too wonderful for me." This is the answer which the camel-driver from Parthia makes to Matthew on the Day of Pentecost. This is what the stevedore at Corinth says to Silas on the pier. This is what the philosopher, Seneca, at Rome, says to Paul. "You cannot make us believe," they say, "that this Power who is shaping and moving the world has anything in common with us." Each of them says, "My world is a very small world. His world is infinite." It is, then, the first duty of anybody who proclaims the eternal gospel to meet that difficulty. The Saviour of men does meet it. All his true apostles meet it, and you and I must meet it. It is perfectly true that, judged by our measuring tapes, some things which God does seem very large, and some things which we do seem very small. But to him there is nothing large and nothing small. And we, as we really come to live in him, to move in him, and have our being in him, — as we come to know what it is that we are his children, to believe in the Father and in the Son, — we shall come to know

that to child and Father there is one life in each and in both. It is one Spirit which inspires the action which we call "large," and it is the same Spirit which inspires the action which we call "small." Here is this poor mother holding her sick baby in her arms. Hour after hour, day after day, she cares for the child with unvarying and unquestioning love. The child does not thank her, cannot thank her, does not want to thank her. But the mother loves still, loves without question, loves without reward. What dictates such sacrifice? It is the same Spirit of Love which sets the universe in motion. It is the Spirit of Love which clothes the world in exquisite beauty, so that the poets may well sing that the angels delight to look on it from afar. It is the same Spirit of Love which flavors the fruit and colors the flower. That Spirit inspires that mother through the dark watches of the night and through the long hours of the day, so that that love is a perfect love and her sacrifice is unfaltering. You shall not say it is any lesser spirit. This display of this Holy Spirit, this visible victory on that little scene, as you call it, between the whitewashed walls of an attic, is as grand, as noble, as infinite, as is that other display when worlds are called into visible being. The one is perfect, and the other is perfect. The newborn Church means to assert this; it means to assert, not simply the greatness of man's origin,

but the dignity of his life. He is engaged here on affairs to which the Lord of lords and King of kings has commissioned him. For those affairs that King of kings and God of gods has commissioned him and inspired him. It is his Spirit, the Infinite and Holy Spirit which rules that universe. It is the same Spirit which quickens the kiss which this mother gives her child. Her affair, also, is infinite, and her love is infinite love.

In the beginning these early teachers meant to express this in their watchword, and that watchword meant this then, when they proclaimed the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit.

And that is what we mean now when we give glory to the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Spirit, "as it was in the beginning."

A very curious study is that historical examination which shows how this simple rallying-cry was transformed into the mechanical and dead church doctrine called the Trinity, as held in the Dark Ages. Egypt had its triads of gods, such as Osiris, Isis, and Horus, which in a fashion were one God. And when the modest Christian school appeared in Alexandria, it was not hard to confuse their simple three, Father, Child, and Spirit, into the sonorous phrases which describe three adorable persons as all three one God. Easier still, when Constantine folded Christianity in his arms and almost stifled her in the embrace, for

him to grant any honors, any statement of deity, to the Jesus Christ who was crucified three centuries before, if, by that easy bargain, he might strike out from the new-born religion those fatal statements that all men were brethren, and that every man was son of God.

It is no business of ours, however, to go again into that fatal story of the Dark Ages. Thanks to the Christian Reformation and to reformation upon reformation which has sprung from it, the Dark Ages are over, and we live in the light again, or at least in the early dawn. The church doctrine of the Trinity died the day Galileo pointed his telescope at Jupiter. For us to-day, then, one of the necessities is to give glory to the divinity of man, as they did in the beginning. When we speak of the divinity of human nature, we do not confine it to the divinity of Jesus Christ, who came and went in Palestine for thirty-three years. We are talking of the infinite power of all the sons of God, and of all his daughters. We are talking of the infinite and eternal life. We are talking of the range of their duties, of the range of their possibilities, of the range of their successes, of the range of their joys. This is it to give glory to the child of God as it was in the beginning.

And in saying this I am only speaking of one detail of what would be for the higher and better life of mankind, if the Church of Christ to-day would *do* what it *says* in the decorous lip-service

of a thousand different forms. It is very true that each age likes to prepare its own symbols, each likes to make its own statements. Nay, each man does this thing. Our dear friend Freeman Clarke used to say that he had reduced the whole to the four words, "Love God, love man." These make an admirable watchword, but of course they require the statement of what you mean by God, and the other statement of what you mean by man. They suppose, that is, that nineteen centuries have brought up the world to the knowledge that God is our Father, and to the knowledge that man is the son of God, is the well-beloved son of God; that man partakes his nature, enters into his work, and enjoys his joy. For myself, I enjoy Paul's phrase, when he says that the abiding elements of life are faith and hope and love.

The French Socialists have taken the phrase "Liberty, equality, fraternity." The English Chartists, the Odd Fellows, the Sons of Temperance, — every leading organization, — has in like wise taken modern words to state its requisition of the times, and to try to turn a fresh corner of the diamond, which has not been rubbed, to do the cutting of the living hour. In every such effort to freshen men's thought and quicken their intelligence, something, certainly, is gained. But all of them involve certain eternal principles. And I say again, if the Church, when it mumbles over these principles in ancient language, could

be electrified by some flash from heaven, or quickened by some explosion of earthly dynamite, or roused by some voice of living prophet, to do the thing which she says that she believes, in that day the Kingdom of Heaven would come. Imagine, if you can, a world in which men should go and come with this sense, that nature is on their side and is not against them; a world in which a man shall rejoice in the snow-storm, in the tempest, in the rush of the tide upon the beach, as a child rejoices in the opening of a snowdrop or the perfume of a rose. Imagine a world in which a man who goes forth to his daily duty shall know that God is with him, is present life, strength, comfort, and joy. It is a world in which he does not suppose that a cruel God is pursuing him to punish him. It is a world in which he does not suppose that a critical or cynical God is weighing him on the scales, to snap him off the balance when he is done with him, because he is mean or imperfect. It is a world in which he knows that if he will only use that which is given him, if he will only resolutely eat the manna which falls to-day, it shall be to him for tonic if not for food, it shall give him strength if it do not give him joy. It is a world in which he studies the forces of God, which he has not understood till now, and lo! he finds that lightning is not the engine of God's wrath, but that it is the humble servant of his own con-

venience and pleasure! He finds that the tempest is not the punishment of man's sins, but that it is to work the wonders of God's present love. The new life, the heart and courage for daily duty, which shall make men do their work — why, as God does his work, gladly, heartily, and of course successfully, is the life which belongs to the world of our Father. It will come the moment when the world really believes in "Our Father." I suppose that that sense of God's love must come first. But it is not impossible for those to see what will come next, who have read the four Gospels. Those who have some touch or sense of the Saviour's life can imagine at least what is to come to the world when men understand as well what it is to believe in the sonship of all God's children. To go about your daily business, as we say here so often, as a prince of the blood royal. This is to share the joy of God; it is to use the strength of God. To forget that any cynic or any fool or any creed ever said that we were born in sin and conceived in iniquity; to forget that any priest or any knave ever proclaimed the folly that we were worms of the dust, and were to cry, "Vile, vile!" or, better than this, to grow up, as I have known children in this church to grow up, utterly ignorant that there ever was such folly or cynicism, which put into words such infinite depreciations of the sons of God, and of his daughters. All this is to give

energy of life and hope to the work of this world; yes, and, let me say, to its pleasures; to make of the work a divine offering, new every morning and fresh every evening; and make the pleasures, as well, to be so many steps in the advance of these princes and princesses, as they go forward, indeed, from life to life, from joy to joy, and from glory to glory. This vision seems somewhat dim, and men take it as less possible than that other vision. God reveals himself as our Father with every morning. And the glory and dignity of the sons of God scattered this world over has no such visible or tangible representation. But the Saviour was such a visible representation. Apostles, prophets, and martyrs have all lived and died in the certainty that this vision is to become more real and more to every generation. Every noble life makes the vision more certain. Every unselfish death makes us apprehend better what is its range and infinitude. So that we may well believe that, as the Church casts off its hypocrisies, treads under foot its shams, and makes its liturgies real, the Church herself shall succeed in proclaiming to all children of sorrow, as she has called them, the infinite reality that they are really sons and daughters of the living God.

Then, and perhaps not till then, will Church and world know what men have been saying when, in a half-stupid, half-mechanical way, they have pretended that they have believed in the Holy Spirit.

One spirit with God who loves the world and the same spirit in the hearts of men and women whom he loves and who love him; to go and come in my daily affair as God goes and comes in his; in the same Holy Spirit, as joyous, as pure, as unselfish, as infinite, — this is what I say is possible when I baptize a little child in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. This is what I say is possible when, with my head bent, I repeat the Apostles' Creed, and say that I believe in the Holy Spirit. There is a much greater reality than saying I believe it, and that reality comes to me when I live in that Spirit, when it inspires me, when it gives me the strength of an infinite child of an infinite God, when it gives to my daily duty the breadth and range of some infinite affair. Then it shows me that the consequences of that duty shall sweep through all time and to them there shall be no distance. It shows to me that the success of to-day's endeavor is not simply the cheer in my own household or the comfort of my own friend, though that is no trifle. It is success ranging through all the world and touching all time; for here is the success, here is the victory, of the Holy Spirit of God himself. This is the spirit in which he moves the worlds and sets them in order. It is in this spirit that his sons and daughters live. They are one in him, he is one with them. This is it to live and move and have my being in my God.

FOURTH SERIES.] [No. 134.

THE PLACE OF JESUS

IN THE

RELIGION OF TO-DAY.

BY

REV. JULIAN C. JAYNES.

AMERICAN UNITARIAN ASSOCIATION

BOSTON

THE American Unitarian Association is the working missionary organization of the Unitarian churches of America. It seeks to promote sympathy and united action among Liberal Christians, and to spread the principles which are believed by Unitarians to be essential to civil and religious liberty and progress and to the attainments of the spiritual life. To this end it supports missionaries, establishes and maintains churches, holds conventions, aids in building meeting-houses, publishes, sells, and gives away books, sermons, tracts, hymn-books, and devotional works.

Tracts descriptive of Unitarian principles, doctrines, and methods, are sent free to any who desire to know what Liberal Christianity stands for and works for. A list of these free tracts will be sent on application. A full descriptive catalogue of the publications of the Association, including doctrinal, devotional, and practical works, will be sent to all who apply. All religious books by Unitarian authors are kept on sale, and will be sent on receipt of price. A list of such books, with prices, will be furnished upon request.

The Association is supported by the voluntary contributions of churches and individuals. Annual subscriptions of any amount are solicited. Address communications and contributions to the Secretary at his office, 25 Beacon Street, Boston, Mass. The following is the simple

FORM OF BEQUEST.

I give and bequeath to the American Unitarian Association, a corporation established by law in the State of Massachusetts, the sum of.....dollars.

THE PLACE OF JESUS IN THE RELIGION OF TO-DAY.

As long as I am in the world I am the light of the world.
JOHN ix. 5.

I WISH to speak to you to-day about Jesus and his place in the religious life of the modern world.

It is by no means an obsolete and outgrown question. Many of the greatest intellectual battles of history have been fought upon this field, and I believe that the final struggle between tradition and truth, between the old faith and the new, will be carried on around the question of the personality and office of Jesus of Nazareth.

As I address myself to this subject, I rejoice that I stand in a pulpit where the widest liberty of speech is accorded, that I look into the faces of those who will credit me with sincerity of thought, however little they may assent to my views, and that I belong to a household of faith where there is no creed to be shattered, no synod to menace, and no danger of religious desolation and famine, if the independent thought be told and the honest conviction expressed.

In the outset I shall ask you to try to divest your minds, for a moment, of any bias or prejudice they may have received with regard to the person of Jesus. Imagine, if you can, that you are not the child of Christian education. Imagine, if possible, that you have never heard of Jesus, — never heard of the books that tell the story of his life.

Now turn with me to that story. Here are four short biographies, whose authorship has never been determined. They were compiled from mouth-to-mouth traditions, from fifty to one hundred years after the hero of them had died.

Open these books and read. The artless simplicity of one, the spiritual imagination of another, will compel your attention and interest. You are introduced to a unique and wonderful personality. You read of a man who was miraculously born of a virgin, whose birth was celebrated by angels' songs and supernatural manifestations, and who all through his life reversed the laws of nature at his pleasure, and after his death rose from the grave and went about among his disciples.

But within this setting of miracle you see the radiant glory of a great soul. You see a man conscious of a grand mission, a man alive with the sense of God, filled with a genuine love for humanity, and possessing a spiritual touch which changed the dead maxims of ancient morality into living truths. You see a radical, a reformer, a preacher of righteousness, a man who was singularly brave, wise, tender, merciful, and just, — a man so loyal to his heart's convictions that neither the fury of a priestly mob nor the tortures of a Roman cross could weaken his purpose or dismay his soul.

Now close the book and turn back to the world. Look along the nineteen centuries that have passed away since this wonderful man ceased to speak.

You will see one very remarkable fact, a fact which, like the incoming ship, grows clearer and larger and more imposing as it approaches your own time and place.

That fact is this, that this unique man, whom the public eye looked upon for less than three years, left an impression upon the world which the combined strength

of Jewish hatred and pagan contempt could not efface. That impression has deepened and brightened with the centuries until now the most complex and magnificent civilization the world ever saw is stamped with the influence of the Nazarene's life. Our art, our literature, our institutions, our morality, and our religion are all inwrought and bound up with the life and the teachings of Jesus. However little we may deserve the title, our civilization in name at least is a Christian civilization.

Now observe something else. Within this Christian civilization there have been working two great religious forces, the spirit of dogmatic religion and the spirit of free religious inquiry.

These two forces have been utterly opposed to each other in nature, in method, and in tendency.

The first has held the field from the beginning. Only in modern times has independent thought grown so strong as to imperil the citadel of religious dogmatism.

What has dogmatic religion done with the historic Jesus? It has constructed a complex system of theology, and at the centre has placed the figure of Christ and has called him the God of the Universe.

It took the old Jewish Scriptures and devised a scheme of salvation. It assumed an original state of innocence in Eden — a fall — a transmission of guilt to all posterity — an age-long anger of God — and finally the appearance of God in the form of Jesus to appease the wrath of Heaven and turn the divine heart once more toward mankind.

It declared that only by accepting this plan of salvation and believing that Jesus was God could men be saved from eternal death.

And for those who doubted — for those who sought for more light — for those who dared to array any scientific

truth against it — it had either discouragement or censure or persecution.

And what has the spirit of free inquiry done? It also has persecuted and maligned. It has failed to appreciate oftentimes the dignity and worth of the historic theology, but it has never been afraid of truth. It has always stood for a progressive religion, a religion that could not be bound by any creed or shut up in any Christology. It has always kept in touch with the growing revelations of human thought and knowledge.

When science threw discredit on the old theology, when it rendered the current ideas of the creation and the fall no longer tenable, when it showed that all the great races of the world have had their Bibles and their miraculous Christs, — this spirit of open religion welcomed the new truths and gladly enlarged its faith to suit the changed conditions of thought.

When the Bible fell from its high seat of supernatural authority, this spirit was there to save its noble thoughts and to welcome it back into the great sisterhood of natural and inspired books.

When the brave hand of Reason reverently removed the crown of deity from the head of Jesus, this same spirit sanctioned the act and was glad, because now, as never before, there looked out upon this world the face of a divine man.

Here, then, are these two forces, — the spirit of the old theology and the spirit of free progressive religious thought.

Both are at work in the world. We can choose the one or the other. We can accord our sympathies and we can cast in our intellectual lot with the interpretations of a thousand years ago, or with the interpretations of modern thought and knowledge.

Suppose we accept the first. Then how shall we read

these gospel stories about the life of Jesus? We must read them in the light of a theology that misunderstood the facts of human nature and was ignorant of the sovereignty of natural law. Everything floats in the atmosphere of the unreal, the irregular, the miraculous. The very words we read, no matter how confused and contradictory they are, become the utterances of Heaven, and are therefore infallible.

The coming of Jesus is now not the result of processes within humanity, but is part of a plan which lay outside of human development.

The figure of Jesus which we see pictured in those pages is the figure of a God, the Creator of the universe, living some thirty years in human form, performing miracles, arguing with the Pharisees, suffering in the garden, and uttering that strange cry: "Not my will, but thine, O God, be done,"—then finally dying upon a cross amid the jeers and scoffs of some Roman soldiers.

Remember, we must interpret his teachings also in the light of this same theology. And so when we read: "Be ye perfect as your Heavenly Father is perfect," we must think of the total depravity of our own nature. When we linger over that sweet story of the Father's unchanging love for the Prodigal, we must match it with the burning wrath of God toward an erring humanity. When we look into the clear light of those wondrous beatitudes, "Blessed are the meek, the pure in heart, the doers of righteousness, for theirs is the kingdom of God," we must eclipse it all with the words: "Unless you believe that he who spoke these tidings was very God of God, your meekness and purity and righteousness are of no avail."

And thus the simple story of that matchless life becomes transformed into an arbitrary scheme of redemption, and the love and peace and splendid heroism

depicted there are made supernatural and are placed outside of all human experience.

But suppose we revolt against the old dogmatic ideas and accept the broader views of the new thought.

Suppose we side with the interpretations that modern knowledge has given of man and his relations to the world and to God. We shall then open these biographies of Jesus and find everything natural, human, perfectly reasonable. No theological mists shall hang over that life to distort its meaning and supernaturalize its quality. We shall know that there was no fall, no inherited guilt, and therefore no divine anger to be appeased and no need of a supernatural mediator. We shall look upon those pages as only human writings, with the errors and misinterpretations incident to human authorship. We shall see in these strange accounts of a miraculous birth, of singing angels, of the healing of the sick and the raising of the dead, only the wonder stories that blossomed in the imagination of loving but credulous disciples.

We shall touch them tenderly because of their beauty, but we shall not accept them as facts, however beautiful they may be. We shall see no God masked in human flesh, no superhuman being vicariously suffering for the sins of a race, no personality or act or event that transgresses the laws of experience or that baffles the reason to explain.

We shall simply lay aside the crudities which belong to the age in which the gospels were written, — lay aside the accessories which a later theology attached to them, — and look upon the real Jesus as he must have been, if the laws of human existence two thousand years ago were the same as they are to-day.

What then remains? We take away the crown of Godhood, we deny the power of working miracles, we

refuse to believe that he was divinely intended to be the central factor of any special scheme of salvation. What then is left to us of the value of the life of Jesus?

All is left that ever existed. All is left that men ever saw, all that the world ever needed, all that was ever necessary to the fullest and finest revelation of God in human life. We have lost the unnatural, the impossible Christ of theology. We have found the real and living Jesus of history. We have found a *man* — and for the glory of God nothing more than a man; and for the glory of humanity, nothing less than a man.

"A mere man," we are often told. Yes, a mere man. That epithet is uttered again and again with the implication that it is a desecration of Jesus. Such an idea is the offspring of a low and unworthy conception of human nature. Could men see what it really implies — could they see the divine nobility that is implied in "mere manhood" — they would understand that Jesus could have accepted it as his grandest and proudest title.

Yes, a mere man, if you please, — a man with the natural limitations of humanity and with all the spiritual height and breadth of the greatest human soul.

I must believe this or believe nothing. I must believe that he was fallible — that he was liable to error as other men are — that he had no unique power over the laws of nature, and that he saw the same contracted physical universe that his contemporaries saw — I must believe that he imbibed many of the ideas of his age — that his sentiments were often the sentiments of the time and of the race to which he belonged — that his views and the words he uttered have no authority beyond the reasonableness that is in them and the truth that they express.

But this is only the negative side, — the side which

shows him to have been on an equality with the men of his day. But when I turn to the other side of Jesus' character, when I look at the thought, the purpose, the endeavor that filled his life, I feel that I am in the presence of the grandest spirit that the world has yet produced.

When I see the simple beauty of his nature, the lofty view which he took of life, the fine loyalty to duty which everywhere marked his work, — I can understand the secret of his influence through centuries of time, and I can scarcely wonder that men have forgotten that he was a man and have worshipped him as a God.

There must be somewhere along the line of human development a type of manhood superior to the rest. You may call it accident or the design of God — but somewhere there is one individual who is the highest and the best.

To me Jesus is that one. He is the flower of humanity. Divine? Yes, as all men are divine. God? Yes, as all men are made in the image of Heaven and are living temples of the Most High. Not infallible, not perfect, not a great scholar, not a student of philosophy or science; and yet with a mind that went so straight to the heart of things, with a moral intuition that so instinctively found the right, with a spiritual insight that so clearly apprehended God, and withal a heart so sympathetic and brave and true, — that he was from side to side the richest, fullest expression of the real greatness and divinity of man.

What then is the office of Jesus in the religion of to-day? What place shall we give him in our thought? How shall we think of him, now that he stands as a man among men?

I. First of all, as the great revealer of God. He spoke as no other man had ever spoken of the real presence, of

the indwelling spirit of the Most High, in the world and in the life of men.

Other men had talked about God. Some had caught glimpses of his justice, some had seen his majesty, some his omnipotence, some his mercy, but it was Jesus who merged all these broken lights into one single beam of radiant love and called it Fatherhood. He conceived of God as in the world and not outside of it — as in the life of humanity and not a solitary despot beyond the clouds. He thought of him — nay, he *knew* him — as the spiritual Father of mankind, as the God who loved men as His children, who punished only to save, who asked for righteousness and not symbols of worship, who thought of the falling sparrow, bound up the wounds of the broken-hearted, sought the wayward in the wilderness of sin and folly and self-absorption and would lead them back to the ways of joy and peace.

This was the God that Jesus knew — this was the God he came to reveal. I say, the God whom he knew, for I think no one can read the story of Jesus' life without realizing that he did know God in a way which we do not seem to find in the lives of other great religious teachers of the world.

He knew him as a real and living presence. The thought of God was with him continually. The air, the waters of Galilee, the hills of his native land, the people he met by the wayside, the experiences of his own life, all were witnesses to him of the brooding love of God the Father.

Among all men, it seems to me Jesus stands pre-eminent as the one who lived nearest to God, whose love of him was strongest, whose trust in him was the grandest, whose thought of him was the truest and the best.

And knowing God as he did, it is not strange that the divine spirit within so exalted the man that his lovers

have deified him. It is not strange that his ideas of God should have so stamped themselves upon his time that the revelation could not die. And to-day, when we pause to consider, we shall find that almost all the thoughts of God that are dearest to us, that are most helpful and inspiring to us, have come down from that revelation of the Father which Jesus made to the world.

II. And then again, Jesus stands in our thought to-day as the great revealer of the dignity, the worth, the divinity of human nature. As I think of that, I marvel that the church could have dared to sacrifice such a shining example of manhood for the sake of completing a metaphysical trinity. If he had never been thought of as a God, no theologian would ever have been bold enough to talk of total depravity and the native meanness of human nature in the face of that splendid type of humanity.

Jesus himself is the best answer to the old doctrines about man. Look at him as he stands there in the gospels, and you see the material out of which God made humanity.

The highest wave that ever flashed in the sunlight is part of the great ocean from which it rose. And so this great life in which men saw the majesty of God was but the highest expression of that common divinity which beats and surges within the bounds of human nature everywhere. Jesus stands as the living witness of your possibilities and mine, the witness of what humanity can be when it asserts its divinity and rises to its best.

Where shall I look for the explanation of my own being? Where shall I go to find the image of what God intended me to be? Shall I find the key of my destiny in the instincts of the brute and the passions of the savage? Shall I study the Bushman of Australia or the native of Patagonia, and say this is human nature?

No, I measure my humanity by the noblest man I know. I take the evidence at the top and not at the bottom. I go to Jesus and interpret my nature and my destiny by his character. I say he is the grandest and the best, and in the monument of his life I see the moral grandeur to which man, the child of God, can lift himself.

And so, to me, Jesus is the morning star of the race. He is man from whom the dust of selfishness has been winnowed by the breath of the spirit. "He is man from whose voice the tones of greed and passion, the cry of the ape and the scream of the tiger, have wholly died away." He is man whose heart is the deep heart of humanity itself. He is a living representative of simple manhood, and is the perpetual revelation of the greatness and the sanctity of our common human nature.

III. And then there is one other thing which Jesus represents in the religious life of to-day. He stands as a spiritual leader. He marches at the head of the column. He inspires by his example, he commands by his teaching, he marks out the way to God by the footprints of his own life.

I need not say how much his leadership has meant in the moral and religious life of Christendom; how under the guidance of his influence millions of lives have grown fine and beautiful; how by the light of his example men have seen the divineness of duty; how in loyalty to his name they have met, without a murmur, derision and shame and death.

And we need that leadership to-day as much as men have in other days. I know how reluctant some are to take any life as a measure of their own or to acknowledge any man as master. I think I can understand the noble independence that inspires the feeling. But most of us are not strong enough to live on abstract principles alone. The rank and file of men need a captain, need some mighty

voice, some commanding presence, that embodies what they want to do and what they aspire to be.

When we are weak, when the coward awakes within us, when the storm of adversity beats into our faces, it is a wonderful help just to look up and see how some other life has trembled and suffered too, and yet has won the victory at last.

And it is here, it seems to me, that the moral leadership of Jesus comes in. He is so completely ours — ours as the founder of our religion; ours in all his relations with our moral standards; ours in the identity of his experiences with our own — that he becomes the guide, the helper, the inspirer of our troubled lives.

I therefore accept his leadership. I do not hesitate to call him master. When I have attained his ethical standards, when I have come as close to God as he did, then I will begin to talk about an outgrown Christianity.

When humanity develops some higher type of manhood than we see in Jesus, it will then be time for us to think about changing our allegiance. But until that day arrives, Jesus must remain in fact at least as the spiritual leader of men.

But, friends, that leadership becomes destroyed the moment you place him above humanity. His victories mean nothing to me as long as I am required to believe that he was more than a man. A God was tempted in the wilderness and conquered! That has nothing to do with my tried and tempted life. But the moment I see there a human being like myself, fighting the demon and winning at last, then all the inspiration of that victory is caught up into my own life and I feel that I too can say: "Get thee behind me, Satan."

I see a God suffering in the garden! I see him again bearing his cross to Calvary and dying upon it! That is a supernatural tragedy. It may fill me with awe. It

may overpower my mind. But it does not touch the springs of my daily action. But let me read that tragedy into a human life; let me see a human soul checking its agony with the prayer of trust; let me see manhood glorifying itself with death for the sake of the truth, — and my whole life is stirred to its depths, and I am stronger to bear pain, stronger to mount the cross of duty, because of the vision I have seen.

I confess it seems to me, and I say it with all reverence, it seems to me that all this trial and suffering and temptation, this agony and death, are somehow empty and hollow and artificial when I associate them with the God of heaven. But when I see my own humanity bearing them with matchless courage, then they become real and significant and put a power into the life of Jesus that a suffering and crucified God could not possess.

Oh, what a mistake it is, then, to separate Jesus from the human race by all this pomp and circumstance of Godhood! What a mistake it is to rob the world of the inspiration of his life by lifting him into the clouds? What a mistake it is to turn all Palestine into a wonderland of miracle and sign, to conceal the great Nazarene in the mists of supernatural power, and to change the simple gospel stories of his life into the oracles of an infallible authority.

Let us wake from this theological dream; let us get out of this unreal and fanciful world and lay hold of something that is tangible and lifelike and true.

Give back to Jesus the humanity he wore. Give back the simplicity he loved, the humility he exemplified, the office of simple service which was dearer to him than all the glory of kings; give him back his divinity and not the crown of deity, and he then becomes what he never otherwise could, — the herald of the Fatherhood of God, the revealer of the dignity of human

nature, the spiritual leader of the world, the great luminous example of manly goodness, the undying source of light and inspiration for the guidance of men out of despair into hope — out of weakness into strength — out of sin into salvation.

FOURTH SERIES.] [No. 135.

WAS JESUS GOD?

HOW DID HE COME TO BE WORSHIPPED AS GOD?

BY

REV. J. T. SUNDERLAND.

AMERICAN UNITARIAN ASSOCIATION
BOSTON

Our Faith.

The Fatherhood of God.
The Brotherhood of Man.
The Leadership of Jesus.
Salvation by Character.
The Progress of Mankind,
onward and upward forever.

Typical Covenant of a Unitarian Church.

In the love of the truth, and the spirit of Jesus Christ, we unite for the worship of God and the service of man.

Our Declaration

(*As expressed in the By-Laws of the American Unitarian Association.*)

"The object of the American Unitarian Association shall be to diffuse the knowledge and promote the interests of pure Christianity; and all Unitarian Christians shall be invited to unite and co-operate with it for that purpose."

(*As expressed by the National Conference of Unitarian and Other Christian Churches, at Saratoga, N. Y., in 1894.*)

"These Churches accept the religion of Jesus, holding, in accordance with his teaching, that practical religion is summed up in love to God and love to man.

"The Conference recognizes the fact that its constituency is Congregational in tradition and polity. Therefore, it declares that nothing in this Constitution is to be construed as an authoritative test; and we cordially invite to our working fellowship any who, while differing from us in belief, are in general sympathy with our spirit and our practical aims."

WAS JESUS GOD?

HOW CAME HE TO BE WORSHIPPED?

Jesus of Nazareth, a *man* approved of God, among you. — SAINT PETER.

To us there is but one God, the Father. — SAINT PAUL.

I ascend unto my Father and your Father, and unto my God and your God. — JESUS.

Jesus Christ belonged to the true race of prophets. One man was true to what is in you and me. He saw that God incarnates himself in man, and evermore goes forth anew to take possession of his world. He said, in this jubilee of sublime emotion: "I am divine. Through me God acts; through me, speaks. Would you see God, see me; or see thee, when thou also thinkest as I now think." The understanding caught this high chant from the poet's lips, and said in the next age: "This was Jehovah come down out of heaven. I will kill you if you say he was a man." The idioms of his language and the figures of his rhetoric have usurped the place of his truth; and churches are not built on his principles, but on his tropes. Christianity becomes a Mythus, as the poetic teaching of Greece and of Egypt before. — EMERSON.

I INVITE you to a consideration — I hope it will be a very candid consideration — of the questions, Was Jesus God? and, How did he come to be worshipped as God?

The impression seems to be quite common that to regard Jesus as not God, but as a man, is to degrade and dishonor him.

I think, on the contrary, that it is to lift him into truer and really greater honor. For — did you never think of it? — a God pinched and compressed into the limit of our finite humanity becomes thereby of necessity a very meagre and small God. Jesus, born as a babe, and in a few years dying; during his boyhood growing in knowledge as you and I do; after he was a man sometimes

disappointed; trying to accomplish ends, and again and again failing because of opposition; declaring that there were some things that he did not know, — furnishes a picture of a God so meagre, so inadequate, so like the little gods that the heathen believe in, that we instinctively push it aside, and demand for our worship something simply infinitely higher and larger, lifted wholly out of the category of this finiteness.

Jesus as a *man* commands the honor and homage of all the world. None can look upon him without feeling the beauty, the greatness, the essential divineness of his life. But clothe him in the garments of deity, and how quickly does his greatness disappear! You have put upon him robes a thousand times too large for any possible finite being. Thus, however good your intention, you really but mock him. How much greater is the honor done him by pushing aside all this childish folly, this ecclesiastical and theological fiction of the ages, and letting him stand up in the strength and winning grace of his incomparable manhood!

But not only do we most honor Jesus by accepting him as just what he claimed to be, a brother man to all of us, but I think that thus also we bring him closer to our humanity, and make him far more helpful to us all as an example, as a guide, as an inspirer in life, than he can possibly be when thought of as a deity. How can a deity be an example to us? We are not deities. God cannot sin; how, then, can God's example of sinlessness help us in our sin? God cannot be tempted; how, then, can his example in resisting the tempter help us in our temptation? But a *man*, who has been tempted as we are, who has suffered as we suffer, and yet who has overcome, and out of it all has risen up into obedience and purity and peace, — such a one can be an example and an inspiration to all men.

"Since he is mortal, even as am I,
And yet so God-like, may not I control
My earthly nature, and lift up my soul
To Christ's, our perfect standard, if I try?

"I hold that he stands nearer to all men,
And fills a higher and more useful place,
Than when he wore a supernatural grace, —
What man has done, that man may do again."

So, then, I think that not only loyalty to truth, but also reverence toward Jesus and desire to make his life practically serviceable to men, unite to urge the importance of the inquiry which we have before us.

In endeavoring to find an answer to our question, Was Jesus God? I shall interrogate: (1) Reason, or Common Sense; (2) The Bible; (3) History, Secular and Church; and (4) I shall endeavor to find the *real origin* of the *idea* that Jesus was God.

I. First, then, what does calm, unbiassed reason have to say upon this subject, judging on general principles and from the nature of the case?

If we could only strip ourselves of our conventional habits of thought and the influence of early education, I apprehend we should require but a very short time to arrive at a conclusion. Familiarity with an idea has great power to blind us to its strangeness, its absurdity, its inherent incredibility. Many an idea which, could it come to our minds freshly and for the first time, would seem unworthy even of consideration, may be carried in a mind which has become familiar with it from childhood without a perception at all of its irrational and essentially absurd character.

So I ween it is with this idea of the infinite and eternal God, who inhabits all worlds and holds all power in his hands, "whom the heaven of heavens cannot contain," coming to this little world of ours, being born as

a babe, living in a human body for thirty-three years or so, and dying upon a cross. Surely it would seem as if the very statement of the idea would, to any rational mind, carry its own refutation.

And it does carry its own refutation, instantly, whenever we see it in any form in which we can judge of it without bias; as, for example, when we see essentially the same thing in connection with other religions, outside of our own.

Go back to the days of the old Roman Empire, and you find the Roman people declaring their emperors to be gods, and worshipping them. What do you do? You turn away, pronouncing it superstition and folly.

Go among the various peoples of central and eastern Asia, where Buddhism prevails, and you find men there to-day worshipping Buddha as God, just as Orthodox Christians worship Jesus.

Go among the Brahmans of India, and they will tell you that God has been incarnate in the world, but it was in their Hindu Krishna.

Go to Thibet, and there you will be told that every one of their Grand Llamas is a special incarnation of God.

Do you believe these people? Certainly not. Yet they all present to you what seems to them strong evidence for what they affirm. To you it seems no evidence at all. Now turn round and present to them your reasons for your belief that Jesus was God, and it will seem to them no evidence at all. Yet you accept it. What is the explanation? This: each has been educated from childhood into his own belief, and so he does not see the absurdity of it. But when he comes to see the very same thing in a different dress and under other circumstances, its unreasonableness at once comes to view.

It is worth our while to ask ourselves this question: If so astonishing an event did really happen on our earth

nineteen hundred years ago as the special and personal residence here for thirty or forty years of the infinite and eternal God, — an event, if true, the most astonishing that it is possible to conceive; an event beside which the lives and careers of an Alexander, a Cæsar, a Mahomet, a Charlemagne, a Napoleon, and a Washington, all combined, are as nothing, — I say, if such an event actually did occur, how does it happen that so little comparatively has come of it?

Grant that Christianity has resulted; yet Christianity, even when it has had eighteen hundred years of time given it in which to grow and expand, is not yet the predominant religion of the world. Buddhism has a still more numerous following, while two or three other religions are not very far behind. Now, to say the least, this would seem a marvel, that the religion which the infinite God himself had come down and lived on earth a third of a century on purpose to found should still, after almost two thousand years, be second in number of adherents to Buddhism, founded by a mere man, and not very greatly in advance of Mohammedanism, founded also by a man.

But, furthermore, as we inquire into this matter of the coming of God to live and die as a human being upon the earth, we discover that quite as strange a part of it as anything was the object that he is said to have had in view in thus coming. When people tell us that the Almighty did thus come to our world, what object do they say he had in so doing? They tell us that his object was to save the human race from perdition in an eternal hell. Well, has he saved the race from that hell? How large a proportion of the race has his coming resulted in saving?

Our Orthodox friends, with their theological views, find themselves obliged to make the proportion very

small, — possibly one-fiftieth part of all who have lived on the earth from the creation up to this time, or possibly one-tenth ; I suppose few would put the proportion higher than one-tenth. But, now, this is all very strange. You can hardly call an effort a success which exceeds in accomplishing only one-tenth of what it aimed to accomplish. So, then, the Almighty was not successful. Thus it would seem. I do not see how to escape the conclusion. Moreover, it seems a very singular proceeding, to say the least, that a God of infinite power and wisdom and love should have *created* an eternal hell, should have decreed that every being who sinned should go there, and then deliberately should have peopled the earth with a race of beings whom he knew would sin. Nor does it seem any less singular or unreasonable when we are told that to try to remedy matters he afterwards came himself to the earth as a human being, and suffered and died, and as a result succeeded in saving, say, *one in ten* of the race.

No, friends, look at it how we will, the idea that the infinite, eternal, and all-wise God, who made the heavens and the earth, "in whom there is no variableness nor shadow of turning," has at some time come to our world and assumed a special human body, in the person of the great Teacher of Nazareth or of any other human being, for the purpose of saving the race from some supposed perdition, or for any other purpose, need only to be candidly and fairly looked at, as it seems to me at least, to appear to the very last degree unreasonable. It is one of those things which we can but marvel should be believed by any intelligent person, and which would not be believed by any intelligent person except for the fact that people are taught it when they are children, too young to perceive how utterly irrational it is.

II. I proceed now, in the second place, to interrogate

the *Bible*, and see what *it* has to teach. I cannot, of course, touch all the arguments or all the scripture passages supposed to bear upon this subject. I shall try, however, to pass by nothing that is vital to the question at issue.

Let us look first for a moment at the Old Testament. It is claimed that there are Old Testament predictions of Jesus which prove that he was God; but scholarship is more and more showing that these claims are without foundation. By far the most clear and weighty of these so-called predictions is that found in Isaiah ix. 6. It reads in our Common Version: "Unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given; the government shall be upon his shoulder; and his name shall be Wonderful, Counsellor, the Mighty God, the Everlasting Father, the Prince of Peace."

Concerning this passage two things are to be observed. First, there is no reason whatever to believe that the prophet had Jesus in mind in uttering it, but much reason to believe the contrary. Second, the highest scholarship shows that our English version gives a faulty translation of the Hebrew, and that a correct translation makes the passage descriptive, not of an incarnate deity, but simply of a human king. The words in the passage which seem to indicate deity are "Mighty God" and "Everlasting Father," but the best scholars, even in Orthodox ranks, leave these words out, and give us others in their place which refer plainly to a man. Instead of "Mighty God," Dr. Briggs gives us as the correct translation "divine hero," and instead of "Everlasting Father," "distributer of spoils." President Harper gives us as the true renderings "a god of a hero," or "a very great hero," and "distributer of spoils." Professor Robertson Smith, of England, agrees with these renderings, as do the greatest European scholars, such as Dr.

Kuenen. Says Robertson Smith, "Isaiah's ideal is only the perfect performance of the ordinary duties of monarchy." Thus fades away the passage which is by far the strongest quoted from the Old Testament in support of the deity of Jesus.

Let us come now to the New Testament. It is sometimes claimed that Jesus must have been God because of the stories of his miraculous birth found in the opening chapters of Matthew and Luke. Is this claim well founded? I reply: First, even if we grant that these miraculous birth stories are historically true, they do not prove the deity of Jesus. They show that his nature was extraordinary, and perhaps superhuman, but they do not take him out of the realm of the created and the finite. They carry no necessary implication that he was the uncreated and omnipotent God, but rather the opposite.

Secondly, and still more important, these birth stories bear evidence of being legendary, not historic. They are found only in Matthew and Luke; they are not found in Mark, which is almost certainly the oldest Gospel. This fact is suspicious. It suggests for them a probably late origin, after the completion of Mark. Quite as suspicious, too, is the fact that Jesus himself never refers to any such miraculous birth; and nobody during his lifetime seems to have known anything of it. If God, and not man, was his father, and if his birth was heralded by angels and attended by miraculous presences, why were his brothers and relatives so long in believing on him? Even his own mother seems not to have known of the story that he had no human father, for she represents Joseph as his father. When the twelve-year-old boy is lost in the Temple, and Mary and Joseph find him, she says to Jesus, "Thy father Joseph and I have sought thee sorrowing."

These miraculous birth stories seem to be simply a legendary accretion that gathered about the history of Jesus long after his death, and subsequent, as I have said, to the compilation of the Gospel of Mark. The Gospels were slow in coming into existence. For a long time there were no written records of the great teacher. As time passed away, and his impressive figure faded into the distance of years, one and another of his followers wrote down what they could remember of his words and deeds. Then began the process of gathering together these precious *memorabilia*. We get traces of various compilings and editings, the final results of which were our Gospels, Mark, Matthew, and Luke. But forty, sixty, eighty years had elapsed. It is not strange that by this time a legendary element should have crept in.

Legends have grown up around nearly all other great men of the past, especially great religious leaders, — as Buddha, Zoroaster, Mahomet, and Moses. Why should they not around Jesus? Especially is there a tendency to associate the miraculous with the *birth* of the great. Buddha was born of a virgin; so was Fo-hi, the ancient founder of the Chinese Paradise. Zoroaster was miraculously conceived. Romulus, the founder of Rome, was son of the god Mars. Alexander the Great had a human mother, but his father was the god Jupiter. Cæsar was called the son of the goddess Venus. There is nothing strange, therefore, that similar legends of a miraculous birth should have attached themselves to Jesus, or that some of them should have crept into the accounts of him that have come down to us. But can any one fail to see that such stories no more prove the deity of Jesus than they do the deity of Cæsar, or Alexander, or Zoroaster, or Buddha?

Turning now from the legendary to the historic parts

of the Gospels, what do we find there regarding the question before us?

Grant, for the sake of argument, — though I do not grant this in fact, — that there are two, or three, or four, or even six passages in the biographies of Jesus which seem, on the face of them and isolated from their settings, to teach that he was God. Shall we let them outweigh the fact, no more to be evaded than the sun at midday is to be evaded, that the entire New Testament, from beginning to end, in every discourse and every act of Jesus, in the whole story of his life, and in every exposition of Christian doctrine made by the apostles, declares, or else necessarily implies, that Jesus was inferior to God, and was not himself God? If Jesus had been God, and had been known to be such by the writers of the biographies we have of him, we should expect the fact, so transcendent in its importance, to have been made clear and unmistakable everywhere from first to last, and not to rest for proof upon, to say the most, half a dozen passages, every one of them, moreover, capable of being interpreted in such a way as to lose all value as proof.

It will certainly be a marvellous thing if Abraham Lincoln shall go down to coming ages having no clear evidence of the fact that he was President of the United States during the War of the Rebellion, coupled with his name in the histories of his life and time that shall be preserved. Yet this would not be a hundredth part so marvellous or so unaccountable as that the supreme God of the universe should incarnate himself in Jesus of Nazareth, or in any other human being, and dwell on the earth thirty-three years on purpose to make himself and his salvation known to men, and then should allow the histories of the time and the biographies of the man in whom he had incarnated himself to be so written as to

convey to future ages no clear indication of what he had done, — indeed, to be so written as to convince a large proportion of the ablest scholars and most intelligent minds of the world that no such special incarnation had ever taken place.

But let us look carefully at the biographies and see just how they do represent Jesus.

The narratives of the life of Jesus that we possess are four in number, — Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John. Of these the first three, called the Synoptic Gospels, are regarded by almost all the reliable critics as much more certainly authentic than the Fourth. Indeed, a large number of the most eminent biblical scholars have long entertained grave doubts as to whether the Fourth Gospel came from the pen of John, or any disciple; and many go as far as to affirm that the evidence is irresistible that it did not.

Now, Jesus in the first three, — the most authentic of the Gospels, — certainly never *says* that he *is God;* but, on the contrary, he does over and over again say what is at least equivalent to the declaration that he is *not God.*

Even going forward and adding the Fourth Gospel, it is essentially the same. So far as I know, there are only two passages purporting to come from the lips of Jesus even in this Gospel which are ever quoted in proof of his supreme deity. One of these is, "I and my Father are one." But this he sufficiently explains when he afterwards prays for his disciples that "they may be one even as we are." Certainly we can find no proof that Jesus was God in a passage which simply says that he and God are one in the same sense in which he prays that his disciples may be one.

The other passage sometimes quoted from this Gospel in proof that Jesus represented himself as God is, "He that hath seen me hath seen the Father." But does this

teach that Jesus is God? Surely not; for, mark, it teaches that if Jesus is God at all, he is God *the Father*. But not even our stanchest Trinitarian friends hold that Jesus was God *the Father*. The passage evidently intends to teach that in Jesus was seen, in a certain spiritual sense, the image, or likeness, or representation, of God's nature and character, just as it is a very common thing for us all to say of a boy, "If you have seen him, you have seen his father," or of a family of children, "If you have seen one, you have seen all." Precisely thus those who had seen Jesus had seen God, his Father and ours, shining out as it were through him, in his love, his purity, his truth, all the beauty and excellency and divineness of his character. Hence the deep and beautiful significance of his saying, "He that hath seen me hath seen the Father."

These two passages, I say, are the only passages in all the Gospels which, so far as I know, are ever quoted as declarations by Jesus himself of his supreme deity; and yet neither of them, as we see when we come to look carefully, teaches anything of the kind. Whereas the declarations from the lips of Jesus to the effect that he was not God are numerous in all four of the Gospels. Among them are such passages as these: "My Father is greater than I," "I can of mine own self do nothing," "The words which I speak unto you, I speak not of myself, but the Father that dwelleth in me [as he dwells in all his human children] he doeth the works," "My meat is to do the will [not of myself, but] of *him that sent* me," "Of that day and that hour knoweth no man, no, not the angels which are in heaven, neither the Son, but the Father." Can God say of himself that there are some things which he does not know? "Why callest thou *me* good? There is none good *but one*, that is *God*." Could God have said that? "I ascend unto my Father

and your Father, to *my God* and your God." Could God have said that?

We see, too, that Jesus constantly prays to another as God, teaches his disciples to pray to that other and not to himself, and nowhere does he teach or intimate that he is a being to whom any one is to pray, now or in any coming time. Surely this is all very marvellous, if he was *deity!*

Nor is this all. When a youth, we find him spoken of as "increasing in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and men." But can God increase in wisdom? Can it be said of God that he increases in favor with himself? When the young prophet sets out upon his public lifework, we find one of his first experiences represented as being that of a long and very severe temptation: the devil tempts him by offering him, among other things, all the kingdoms of this world. But can God be tempted? Especially can he be tempted by the devil with an offer of the petty kingdoms of this world when all worlds are already his own? We find Jesus always mingling with men as himself a man. He suffers as others suffer. He weeps as others weep. He is disappointed as others are disappointed, —as, for example, when he comes to the fig-tree expecting to find figs, and finds none. But can God be disappointed? Jesus has his hours of discouragement and gloom as other men have. For example, on the cross he exclaims in agony, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" But can God be discouraged? Can God forsake himself? If Jesus had been God, would not such language have been mere pretence? Nay, would it not have been out and out deception?

Is it said that at least the miracles of Jesus prove him to have been God? I reply, the Bible represents man as working miracles. Elijah and Elisha go so far as even to raise the dead.

No, friends, whatever else Jesus may have claimed, if the Synoptic Gospels are true, he did not claim to be God. Nor do the Gospels make such a claim for him. Everywhere in their pages he is portrayed as a man, a brother of all other men, and a child of the infinite Father, as all other men are.

It is plain, too, that the disciples of Jesus did not believe him to be God. For note: if he really was the Almighty Jehovah, and if his disciples really regarded him as such, there must have been some particular time when they first found out this startling and stupendous fact. And when they found it out, it must have produced in them, one and all, feelings of the most overwhelming amazement and awe; and from that hour their conduct toward him must have been utterly changed, and they must have shown in every act and word their feeling of humility and homage in his presence.

But as we examine the accounts that have been handed down to us, what do we find? Any record of such a discovery made by them at any time? None. Any sign of such changed conduct toward Jesus? None whatever. They all continue to treat him to the end with the familiarity of a fellow-man, and give no intimation that they even dream that he is other than human. At one time Peter took occasion to rebuke Jesus. Does this look as if then he thought him God, the Almighty? In the Garden of Gethsemane all the disciples forsook Jesus and fled. Does this indicate that they had yet found out that he was the Supreme Jehovah? During the trial of Jesus, Peter denied him. Would he have done so if he had thought him omnipotent? He would not have denied Cæsar at Rome. How, then, could he have denied one whom he believed to be more powerful than a thousand Cæsars? At the sepulchre the disciples wept, disconsolate, believing that their leader's cause

had failed, and that all their hopes were blighted. This surely shows they had not yet found out that he was God. When, then, did they find it out?

Was it after the resurrection? There is no record or sign of its occurring then. On the contrary, the accounts represent the disciples as continuing their former familiar manner of intercourse with Jesus up to the very morning of the ascension. Indeed, their conversation with him on that very morning does not differ at all in character from those of earlier times. Nor is there any sign even on the Day of Pentecost that they had yet made the stupendous discovery. If at that time they had been possessed of this astounding knowledge, do you think it would have been possible for Peter so to hide it and so to dissimulate before the people as to have coolly begun his sermon on that great occasion, "Jesus of Nazareth, a *man* approved of God among you, by miracles and wonders and signs, which God did by him"? Nor is there any account or indication of this knowledge ever coming to them at all.

Now, is such an amazing omission for one moment credible? Could we not more easily account for the omission from the Gospels of anything else whatever than the omission of the record or announcement of an event which, if true, was beyond comparison the most important in the world's whole history?

Let us now leave the Gospels and pass to the Acts and Epistles, and see if here we can discover any evidence that the apostles believed Jesus to have been God. What do we find in these books? We find still Christ spoken of as a created and subordinate being. True, he is often referred to in very exalted terms. It is plain that as the years went by he became lifted up in the minds of his followers to a great height, and surrounded with a very splendid halo of idealization. Evidently the

exceedingly mystical Logos doctrine of the time had come to some extent into the minds of some of them, — at least the author of the Fourth Gospel, — and the general philosophical and religious thought of the age, which was mystical, and which tended to wipe out the line between the human and the superhuman, between men and gods, — evidently all had had its effect in causing the apostles to portray Jesus, certainly not as God, but sometimes as a being whom we, with our sober, scientific, less imaginative, less dreamy, more clear-thinking minds find some difficulty in putting always in the category of the human. But this is as far as we can go. This said, all is said. To claim these occasionally idealized and more or less mystical representations of Jesus as proof that he was God, or that the apostles thought he was God, would be utterly unwarrantable, as will be seen clearly by simply referring to a few of the large number of declarations which are not entangled in any mysticism, but which are clear, clean-cut, unmistakable. "Him hath *God* ordained," "him hath *God* set forth," "him hath *God* raised up," is the constant burden of apostolic teaching. God was over him, guiding him, inspiring him, helping him, giving him wisdom and power. This is the constant representation. How many times do the apostles designate the Almighty as the *God* as well as the *Father* of Jesus Christ! Saint Paul says, "There is one God, and one mediator between God and man, the *man* Christ Jesus." Saint John says, "God loved us and sent his son to be a propitiation,' etc. How misleading are such words as these, if that son was himself God! What deception am I guilty of if I say, "I sent my son," meaning I went myself!

That old passage in 1 John, "There are three that bear record in heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost, and these three are one," — a passage which far

more than any other has been the corner-stone of the doctrine of the Trinity, — is now universally cast out as spurious, there being no longer even a shadow of a reason for believing it to be genuine. Every respectable scholar now omits it. If you will look at the Revised Version of the New Testament, made a few years ago by a committee of scholars of all Protestant denominations, you will find there the passage left out as spurious.

Perhaps nothing in all the writings of the apostles has more light to throw upon the question of the deity of Jesus than the Epistle of James. I wish you would read it with this question in view. James, the writer of this epistle, was probably the brother of Jesus, son of the same parents, brought up in the same home. Surely he, if anybody, then, knew if Jesus was God. But read the epistle, and you will not find the slightest intimation of any such thing. Now, how are you going to account for this? If Jesus had been God, do you think his own brother would not have known it, or would not have thought it a thing of enough moment to be worth mentioning? Do you think he would fill his epistle full of other things, and not mention or hint the fact of most importance in all the history of the world? You see it is simply incredible.

This, then, in brief, is the testimony which the New Testament has for us bearing upon the question, Was Jesus God?

And now let me ask in all candor, Is it proof? Does it begin to be proof? Does it even show that any of the New Testament writers *thought* that Jesus was God? If it did that, still that would not be certain proof that he was; for we know how easy it is for people to be mistaken even nowadays. How much more easy was it in a credulous, uncritical age like that in which Jesus appeared! We are told in the Acts that the people of

Lystra thought *Paul* was a god. Yet none of *us* think he was. So that I say, even if the New Testament writers had *supposed* Jesus to be a deity, and had so recorded, still that would be only slight proof that he was such. What, then, shall we say when we find, as we have found, that the New Testament writers, as a whole, teach nothing of the kind, but the opposite. No one of them, with the possible exception of the author of the Fourth Gospel, who has to be thrown out of the account in a discussion of this kind, because we do not know who he was, and because he wrote his Gospel almost certainly as late as near the middle of the second century, after the work of deifying Jesus had begun, — I say, not a single New Testament writer, with this one possible exception, seems even to have dreamed of Jesus being the Almighty God. His neighbors all speak of him and treat him as a man; his parents and brothers and sisters do the same; his disciples do the same. It is plain that the idea of his being a deity was the invention of a later time. How and when and why it arose we shall see presently.

III. Leaving now our interrogation of the Bible upon the subject before us, shall we next turn for a very few moments to *History*.

There are two different and distinct branches of history which have testimony to give, negative or positive, with regard to this question which we are studying.

The first is *Sacred* or *Church* History. Did the early Christian Church regard Jesus as God?

In reply to this inquiry I unhesitatingly answer, No. The evidence is clear that the early Christian Church was Unitarian. The doctrine of the Trinity — including, of course, the doctrine of the deity of Christ — came into being, as is well known, in the second, third, and fourth centuries, having had its origin unquestionably in the

speculative and exceedingly mystical neoplatonism of Alexandria. A theological battle arose over it, which raged throughout Christendom, tearing in pieces the Greek and Latin Churches in the most terrible manner, and awakening everywhere alienation and hatred where before had been comparative peace and harmony. The Council of Nicæa, which established the Trinitarian doctrine as orthodox and to be henceforth the faith of the Church, for a long time hung in doubtful balance over it. And when at last the council decided in favor of the doctrine, the real influence which turned the scale seems to have been the Emperor Constantine, a man who shaped all his course and conduct by what he thought policy, having several different times in his life changed back and forth between Unitarianism and Trinitarianism. And so but for the influence of the crafty emperor, who happened at that moment to be training with the Trinitarian party, Unitarianism, the prevailing belief of the Church up to that time, — including, of course, this doctrine of the non-deity of Jesus, — would doubtless have been the prevailing belief of Christendom to-day instead of Trinitarianism with its doctrine of the deity of Jesus.

So much, then, for our interrogation of Church History. Let us turn now for a moment's look outside of the Christian Church, and see whether the *Secular* or *Profane* History (so called) of those early times has any light to throw upon the question before us.

To revert to a thought which I have already slightly touched, it really would seem incredible that the Creator of the Universe should have come into human form and dwelt for a term of years upon this earth without its being known at least to the age in which the event occurred. Very well, then; *did* the age of Jesus have any sort of *suspicion* even that in Palestine there was an event of such stupendous magnitude transpiring? That

whole age is well covered by numerous and reliable histories. The most important political and social events occurring within the bounds of the Roman Empire are preserved to us in detail. As to Palestine, the country in which the occurrence under consideration is said to have taken place, it was a country lying far inside the boundary lines of the empire. Men well known at Rome and among the great men of the time had for a considerable term of years been its governors. Greek learning had for three centuries flowed freely through it. Certainly the Jews themselves must have been familiar with the notable events going on within its borders. What, then, do we find in the annals of the time regarding an event so much more astonishing than anything in the history of Rome or Athens, or than anything that had gone before it in the history of Palestine? Surely we shall find the histories of the Greeks and of the Romans, and especially of the Jews of the time, crowded with it, giving everything else a secondary place in comparison.

But when we turn to the histories of the age, what do we find? Three Roman writers — Tacitus, Pliny the younger, and Suetonius — mention Jesus, thus proving that there was such a person, and that he originated the Christian movement. But that is all. Not the slightest intimation is given that there was reason to believe him to be the eternal God, or that he was anything else but a man.

Turning to Jewish historians and writers of the time, we find Jesus mentioned in very derogatory ways in the Talmud, by those who were evidently his bitter enemies; and also we find him somewhat favorably mentioned in two short passages by the eminent historian, Josephus. One of these passages is probably wholly spurious, and the other partly so; and yet, even if we accept them both as fully genuine, they give no intimation that the

historian, Jesus' own countryman, and born only two years after the Crucifixion, believed the teacher of Nazareth to be God.

And these are absolutely *all* the mentions which history, outside of the Bible, makes of Jesus, — Roman history, Greek history, or Jewish history.

So, then, we have reached very quickly the answer to our question as to whether the age of Jesus knew anything about the Almighty and Eternal God dwelling incarnate in its midst.

No, history drives us to affirm either that Jesus was not God, or else that an event, as I have already said, incomparably more startling in its character and more towering in its grandeur and significance than any other in the history of mankind took place absolutely in a corner, — unknown to the world, unknown to the nation among whom it occurred, unknown to anybody except a little company of a dozen obscure men, and, as I think I have shown the overwhelming evidence to be, unknown to a single one of them.

So much, then, for the testimony of *History* as to whether the contemporaries of Jesus believed him to be God.

I said in the beginning of my lecture that I should interrogate first, Reason; second, the Bible; third, History, — to see what answer each would make to our question. I have now finished the inquiry in each of these three directions.

Only one thing more remains for me to do, — namely, to attempt to throw a little light, if I may, upon the question of how it was that men came to suppose Jesus to be divine. Where did the idea of God's incarnation in him come from? We can hardly believe that such an idea could of itself and independently have leaped into existence in the minds of so large a part of the Christian

whole age is well covered by numerous and reliable histories. The most important political and social events occurring within the bounds of the Roman Empire are preserved to us in detail. As to Palestine, the country in which the occurrence under consideration is said to have taken place, it was a country lying far inside the boundary lines of the empire. Men well known at Rome and among the great men of the time had for a considerable term of years been its governors. Greek learning had for three centuries flowed freely through it. Certainly the Jews themselves must have been familiar with the notable events going on within its borders. What, then, do we find in the annals of the time regarding an event so much more astonishing than anything in the history of Rome or Athens, or than anything that had gone before it in the history of Palestine? Surely we shall find the histories of the Greeks and of the Romans, and especially of the Jews of the time, crowded with it, giving everything else a secondary place in comparison.

But when we turn to the histories of the age, what do we find? Three Roman writers — Tacitus, Pliny the younger, and Suetonius — mention Jesus, thus proving that there was such a person, and that he originated the Christian movement. But that is all. Not the slightest intimation is given that there was reason to believe him to be the eternal God, or that he was anything else but a man.

Turning to Jewish historians and writers of the time, we find Jesus mentioned in very derogatory ways in the Talmud, by those who were evidently his bitter enemies; and also we find him somewhat favorably mentioned in two short passages by the eminent historian, Josephus. One of these passages is probably wholly spurious, and the other partly so; and yet, even if we accept them both as fully genuine, they give no intimation that the

historian, Jesus' own countryman, and born only two years after the Crucifixion, believed the teacher of Nazareth to be God.

And these are absolutely *all* the mentions which history, outside of the Bible, makes of Jesus, — Roman history, Greek history, or Jewish history.

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Church! there must at least be an explanation; there must have been a producing cause. Can we discover them?

I think we shall be able easily to find an explanation and a cause, which at the same time will be an additional argument in proof that the supposed deity of Jesus was only a speculation or superstition, and not a reality. But let us see.

I have already called attention to the fact that the ideas of gods incarnating themselves in human forms and of men becoming gods, are not new ideas in the world. On the contrary, the oriental world from the earliest times has been full of such ideas, floating nebulously in the minds of men. Indeed, there was hardly one of the oriental nations existing at the time of Jesus, but had its legends and popular beliefs of one or more of the gods coming down at some time or other and assuming the form of a man, and dwelling on earth.

Rawlinson in his Herodotus tells us that the Egyptians believed that their god Osiris had incarnated himself in human form and dwelt among them.

The Chinese have the popular belief that Lao-tse existed from all eternity, but descended to earth, was born of a virgin, lived a human life, and when his work of beneficence among men was done, ascended up bodily into heaven.

Brahmanism is full of the incarnation idea. Vishnu is believed to have been incarnated nine times.

I have spoken of the belief among the Buddhists that Buddha was an incarnation of God, and the belief in Thibet that the Grand Llamas or Pope Emperors of that country are all incarnations of God in human form.

In the Greek and Roman world, too, in the midst of which Christianity had its birth and early development, we find essentially the same thought everywhere. The

minds of the people were full of belief in gods whose forms were those of men; and also of men deified, or raised up to the condition of gods. The founders of Rome were deified and worshipped as gods. All the Roman emperors for a long period of time were raised to divine honors. Suetonius tells us that the people fully believed in the divinity of Julius Cæsar. Marcus Aurelius was still worshipped in the time of Diocletian. Antinous was adored in Egypt a century after his death. From Cæsar to Constantine sixty persons in all were deified. Constantine was doubly deified; he was apotheosized by the pagans and canonized by Christians, and coins were stamped having on them a monogram signifying Jesus, Mary, Constantine; all three seemingly being put on a level as equally divine.

Here, then, we have a picture of the thought of the age — and of the religious beliefs of the age — in which Jesus appeared, and in which Christianity began its career in the world.

Thus we see that the incarnation idea was not something unknown, something that can be accounted for only by supposing that God did actually come to earth and dwell in human form in Jesus. On the contrary, it was a common idea, entertained among many peoples, and in many forms, familiar at the time of the rise of Christianity to everybody in the Roman world. What is more natural than that in such an age Jesus too should have been lifted up to divine honors, as well as so many others? An age that could deify Grecian lawgivers and Roman emperors, why should it not deify Jesus? An age that could believe in incarnations of gods in animal forms (as in the sacred bull of Egypt), and in human forms (as in Buddha, Lao-tse, Osiris, and Krishna), — what more natural than that such an age, as time went on and the real human Jesus faded into the background,

should, little by little, speculate itself into the notion that he too was an incarnation of God.

Moreover we must not forget that the Christians who were converts from Judaism, from the very first identified Jesus with the being whom the Jews expected would come as their Messiah. But the popular notion of the Messiah was that he was going to be a man who in some way would possess supernatural power, — a king who would set up an earthly and yet a supernatural kingdom. Right here, then, in this attempt of his earthly followers to make him fulfil the vague, speculative, and supernaturalistic messianic idea, we have the first step toward making Jesus a god.

Then came surging in upon this all the Gnostic and Neoplatonic and oriental philosophical speculation of the time, full of these ideas of incarnations which I have been describing. And finally the Christians were brought into contact all the while with a government which raised its emperors into objects of worship. Where, then, is there anything strange in the thought that the Christians should have soon come to think of their master also as a divine being — a god incarnated in human form — or a man by his purity of life and suffering elevated to be a god?

Surely nothing could have been more natural. All religious doctrines are more or less the outgrowth of their age. What doctrine concerning Jesus and God could have been more exactly and perfectly the child of the age in which Christianity had its origin and early history, than this doctrine that Jesus was God? And such a doctrine once distinctly formulated and incorporated into the creeds of the church, of course would stoutly and long hold its place against no matter how much of new light. And so we have this doctrine as a part of all the confessions and creeds of so-called Orthodox Christendom to-day.

But enough. I have now answered as well as a single discourse will allow, the questions with which I set out — Was Jesus God? And, How did he come to be worshipped?

Just a word more in closing.

Are there any here who say to me that in undertaking, as I have done this evening, to show that Jesus was a man and not God, I am dishonoring Jesus, and tearing down the time-honored religious belief of a large part of the Christian world?

To the first of these charges, I can only reply again as in the beginning of my discourse: No, I deny that it dishonors Jesus — rather do I affirm that it lifts him up into the truest honor — to insist on his humanity, and to refuse to wrap the garments of a fictitious deity about him. As God he is petty, insignificant, pitiful. But as a man, words are too poor to express the grandeur and greatness of his nature. As a deity, he fades away into a shadowy myth. As a man, he is the most real, living, and influential character in history, — the topmost, finest flower on the tree of our great humanity.

As to the second charge, that I am tearing down that which to many is a cherished belief, I reply: Yes, in a sense I am, just as I should be tearing down a belief which many cherish if I urged that Buddha or the Virgin Mary are not proper objects of worship. But is there no justification? Is truth not to be spoken unless all men assent to it? I simply tear down a great, hurtful superstition, that grew up in a dark and credulous age, and has ever since cast its shadow across the face of God, robbing him of his honor, hiding him from sight, and dividing Christendom into warring sects.

The real work that Jesus did in his day was to reveal God, — to reveal him more clearly than any other great religious teacher or prophet had ever done. Alas, that

men in their superstitious and mistaken zeal should have lifted him into the place of God — the creature into the place of the Creator — the one who taught men to pray to his Father and ours, up to the throne of the universe, himself to be prayed to; thus making of him instead of a revealer of God, a concealer, a usurper of God's place! Do we shrink from worshipping idols? How then can we consent to take a created being, no matter if he be the pure, wise, noble Jesus, and raising him aloft in our imaginations, bow down in worship before him, instead of bowing in worship always and only before the God above him and above us all, up to whom he never failed humbly and earnestly to point his followers?

No, friends, I do not touch thoughtlessly or rashly any religious belief held sincerely by any human being. I do not pull down except to build better. I only say to men, "Do not worship Jesus," in order that I may the more emphatically and earnestly say, "Worship him whom Jesus worshipped, and taught men everywhere to join with him in worshipping, as our common Father in Heaven."

Tenderly let us love Jesus; sincerely let us honor him; gladly and gratefully let us sit at his feet, to learn wisdom from his gracious lips and his matchless life. But let us not follow in the path of the ancient pagan peoples and deify the man we would honor, even if that man be the great and incomparable Galilean. Rather let us be his so true and faithful disciples, that, in all worship, we shall be pointed by him ever to *his Father and our Father, to his God and our God!*

Words are inadequate to paint the evil results that have come to religion and the world from the deification of Jesus. It was this that brought into the Christian Church the reign of creeds and dogmas which for so many centuries has blighted Christianity, and which, alas!

is far from over yet. So long as Jesus remained a man, the aim of his followers was to love him and follow him in deeds of helpfulness and mercy. When he became a god, all minds turned to the task of framing right theories about him; and woe to any who dared to think differently from the opinion of the majority. Thus Christianity became changed from love to belief, from conduct to speculation, from a life to a theology, — with the inevitable consequences of divisions, strifes, heresies, endless multiplication of sects, hatreds, religious wars, persecutions, untold bloodshed.

When will these evils pass away? Never, until their cause is removed. Jesus the god has always been, not only a usurper of his father's throne, but a sower of seed of endless speculation, contention, and strife among men. But Jesus the man — the man whose teaching and life were love and helpfulness — has always been an influence in the world for love and peace. And so in the nature of the case it must always be.

It is plain then that the salvation of Christianity lies in going back from the deified Christ of the creeds and the theologies to the loving, living human Jesus of the Gospels.

It is hopeful that already in many quarters the cry is being raised, Back to Jesus! the *real* Jesus of the Sermon on the Mount, the Lord's Prayer, the Golden Rule, the two great Commandments, and the incomparable Parables! And well may this cry be heard, because this means back from fiction to truth, back from mythology to reality, back from creed to deed, back from speculation to love, back from division and strife to unity and peace.

And such a going back as this means *going forward*, — forward to such an *advance as Christianity has never known.*

STEPS OF BELIEF

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AMERICAN UNITARIAN ASSOCIATION
25 Beacon Street, Boston

UNITARIANISM IN AMERICA

A History of its Origin and Development

By George Willis Cooke, Member of the American Historical Association, American Association for the Advancement of Science, American Academy of Political and Social Science, etc.

Size, 5 3-4 x 8 1-2 inches; pages, 463; 21 full-page illustrations; price, $2.00 *net;* postage, 14 cents additional.

THE purpose of this work is to furnish a complete, impartial, and candid record of the origin and growth of American Unitarianism, with accounts of its organization, its progress, and its relation to all present-day movements for social and religious betterment, all of which is presented in "the true spirit of the historical method, without reference to local interests and without sectional preferences." Controversial treatment is thus happily avoided. The author has made long and thorough examination of original manuscripts and journals, as well as many magazines, newspapers, and printed reports of various kinds. The result has been to bring together into a single octavo volume of 475 pages much valuable material, heretofore to be found only in widely scattered sources, and a large array of facts not obtainable elsewhere. The volume is fully indexed, making all references to any one topic readily accessible. The book thus becomes a valuable reference work as well as a thoroughly readable and instructive history. It has been written with special reference to its helpfulness in explaining the Unitarian attitude and temper.

The opening chapters begin with the English Sources of American Unitarianism, followed by chapters upon the Liberal Side of Puritanism, the Growth of Democracy in the Churches, and the Silent Advance of Liberalism. Then follows the organization of the American Unitarian Association, and its various activities as the national executive organization of our churches are fully set forth. Chapters are given to the accounts of the Sunday School Society, the Boston Fraternity of Churches, the Women's National Alliance, the Post-office Mission, and other enterprises which mark the spirit of Unitarian endeavor. The relation of Unitarianism to philanthropy, reforms, education, and literature, receive special chapters of unusual interest. The closing chapter treats of the future of Unitarianism.

In addition to the text itself are twenty-one full-page half-tone portrait illustrations of prominent Unitarian leaders, including a frontispiece of Channing. These grouped pictures add not a little to the general interest of the volume.

AMERICAN UNITARIAN ASSOCIATION

25 Beacon Street, Boston

THE American Unitarian Association is the working missionary organization of the Unitarian churches of America. It seeks to promote sympathy and united action among Liberal Christians, and to spread the principles which are believed by Unitarians to be essential to civil and religious liberty and progress and to the attainments of the spiritual life. To this end it supports missionaries, establishes and maintains churches, holds conventions, aids in building meeting-houses, publishes, sells, and gives away books, sermons, tracts, hymn-books, and devotional works.

Tracts descriptive of Unitarian principles, doctrines, and methods, are sent free to any who desire to know what Liberal Christianity stands for and works for. A list of these free tracts will be sent on application. A full descriptive catalogue of the publications of the Association, including doctrinal, devotional, and practical works, will be sent to all who apply. All religious books by Unitarian authors are kept on sale, and will be sent on receipt of price. A list of such books, with prices, will be furnished upon request.

The Association is supported by the voluntary contributions of churches and individuals. Annual subscriptions of any amount are solicited. Address communications and contributions to the Secretary at his office, 25 Beacon Street, Boston, Mass. The following is the simple

FORM OF BEQUEST.

I give and bequeath to the American Unitarian Association, a corporation established by law in the State of Massachusetts, the sum of.....dollars.

Fourth Series.] [No. 136.

THE

UNITARIAN VANTAGE-GROUND.

BY

PROF. FRANCIS A. CHRISTIE.

AMERICAN UNITARIAN ASSOCIATION

BOSTON

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The Brotherhood of Man.
The Leadership of Jesus.
Salvation by Character.
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In the love of the truth, and the spirit of Jesus Christ, we unite for the worship of God and the service of man.

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(*As expressed in the By-Laws of the American Unitarian Association*).

"The object of the American Unitarian Association shall be to diffuse the knowledge and promote the interests of pure Christianity; and all Unitarian Christians shall be invited to unite and co-operate with it for that purpose."

(*As expressed by the National Conference of Unitarian and Other Christian Churches, at Saratoga, N. Y., in 1894.*)

"These Churches accept the religion of Jesus, holding, in accordance with his teaching, that practical religion is summed up in love to God and love to man.

"The Conference recognizes the fact that its constituency is Congregational in tradition and polity. Therefore, it declares that nothing in this Constitution is to be construed as an authoritative test; and we cordially invite to our working fellowship any who, while differing from us in belief, are in general sympathy with our spirit and our practical aims."

THE UNITARIAN VANTAGE-GROUND.

The most gratuitous form of mistake is prophecy, said George Eliot. Equally hazardous, perhaps, is the effort which a man makes to look abroad over his own age and measure the power and importance of any of its forces. Nevertheless I have been asked by you to speak of the place of Unitarianism among the forces of the age, and the difficulties of profoundly grasping a whole complex world of relations does not deter me from accepting your invitation. A partial comprehension is better than none at all, and it is a step to complete insight. I am willing, therefore, to contribute my partial understanding of a problem which will only be solved when men look back upon our time as something clearly differentiated from its before and after.

It is obvious that our hopes and imaginations outrun our numbers. When we look back over history, we have cause to be supremely indifferent to the numerical test. Those whom humanity reveres and idolizes in the story of morals and religion have always been in the minority in their own day, and the larger biological survey of life assures us that the forward step has been not simultaneous drift of the mass, but the variation of the individual, or the few from the general type. At any given time unreason has been able to count its majorities, and the orthodox Protestant who calls attention to the poverty of Unitarian statistics would get

small comfort by comparing Protestant Christianity and Buddhism. The main thing is to be sure that the truth is in us, and then if we have faith that humanity in the end adjusts itself to truth, we may be sure that in after times we shall look back upon our little company with a supreme regard. An orthodox friend of mine told me once that the place of Unitarians was that of pioneers in religion. Well, who would not be a pioneer? I fancied that I heard in my friend's word an envious longing for spiritual pioneering. The interesting thing is that in spiritual things like art and science and religion the pioneer and his band are the only ones that are much valued later. When men look back, the rest are counted then simply as survivals of older time, mere representatives of an earlier thought. The new spiritual ideal of the pioneer is even called the distinctive thing, the defining thing, because it was humanity's new forward movement that made the age distinguishable from the older past.

Mr. Claude Phillips has recently declared the typical character of the nineteenth century to have been a new ideal of truth, heroic in fearless sincerity as in all-embracing sympathy. It sounds very much as if he were speaking of Unitarianism, with its fearlessly sincere relinquishment of hampering traditional doctrine and its generous humanitarianism in ethical interest. Possibly, then, we may lay the flattering unction to our souls that Unitarianism, in spite of its numerical inferiority, has been the characteristic expression in religion of the spirit of nineteenth-century life. There is all the more ground for appealing to this student of culture, when we find him saying further that the century just past was distinguished by its worship of humanity as it is, by its effort to find in man, whatever his wretchedness of condition, an expression of the supremely highest being:

the word made flesh. There, surely, we have Channing's one sublime idea, the dignity of human nature. There, surely, we have the Unitarian repudiation of the old doctrine of a totally corrupt spiritual nature in man, and its utter spiritual hopelessness before a "holy violence" should be wrought upon it by arbitrary divine operations without it. There is then a unison between the highest modern intuition about human life and the distinctive religious tenet of our modern forward movement in religion. I say our distinctive tenet — for the New England liberalism began not as a doctrine of the divine unity but as a doctrine of human nature. The distinctive and the permanent principle of our company is an affirmation of the highest spiritual capacity of man. It is that principle which has emancipated us from the horrible doctrine of divine enmity to sinners as preached by Edwards and his followers. It is that principle which has enabled us to grasp and preach the sublime affirmations of the historical Jesus concerning the divine fatherhood. It is that principle which has emancipated us from narrow and superstitious views of a mechanical revelation to incompetent human intelligences. It is that principle which has led us to look with sympathy and kindness on the world-wide manifestations of religion under whatever name. It is that principle which has enabled us to cherish religion in close harmony with the interests of culture and social progress. It is that principle which has enabled us to view Jesus Christ as the supreme instance of spiritual capacity among men, and to draw from him religious inspiration and illumination and fervor without alienating him from the ranks of humanity. Given our central doctrine of the nature and capacity of the human spirit as so far akin to the divine that always in every enactment of good it is recipient of the divine life, so far

akin to God that its own ideal conception of itself in the symbol of fatherhood is a revelation of the character of the God who made us; from that doctrine, I say, all the rest of Unitarianism follows as corollary and result. It is an ultimate question, then, that divides us from orthodoxy, — the question of the relation of the human spirit to God. In a sense it may be said that we aim to assert for human nature what the older churches have strictly limited to the case of Jesus. For him they have maintained a perfect kinship and association of the divine and the human, but they have been so governed by a sceptical distrust of the human nature as to deny to men at large that direct access to God which was claimed for Jesus alone, and even in his case the constant tendency of that distrust was to conceive his humanity as wholly absorbed in his deity. Now, I wish to set forth before you that the whole Protestant world is finding itself subject to a critical historical revision of its system of doctrine and that this profoundly effective historical study is revealing the fact that the exclusive deification of Jesus was not the pure result of a religious insight, or of scientific analysis, but the result of mixed and confused historical tendencies, — a thing, then, not of absolute and final value but of mere historical relativity, bound to pass away when the conditions that generated and maintained it pass away. Religious conviction cannot remain staked on a thing historically relative and contingent, and modern religion therefore begins to admit or profess that the essence of the Christian religion is not to be found in the conception of Christ's nature which was so long made the cardinal feature of the Christian system. Once the law of the Roman empire made common denial of the Trinitarian doctrine liable to banishment, while teachers of anti-Trinitarian heresy were threatened with death. Now

the Protestant world is accustomed to see the Trinitarian doctrine either treated with cold apology or set quite in the background. Let me have your patience while I state the history of the case in outline.

History makes clear that about the year 200 the view which we call orthodox was the view of only a few. Let us confine our attention to the city of Rome. There were three competing views there. In the first place there was an earnest and learned body of Christians who plainly and seriously looked upon Jesus as a man, a man empowered to do great things and to teach great truths by a gift of spiritual power from God. The Holy Spirit was for them an impersonal divine energy, a divine operation. It was given to Jesus at his baptism, and a further gift of divine help raised him from death to the world of God. For them the story of Jesus was the story of a saintly man specially aided by God, and the Christian life was in their conception a life in which every believer received similar divine power in baptism, and at the end a like resurrection. Jesus was thus the first-born among many brethren, but there was no abandonment of the human rank. Now, from about 190 these Christians were not recognized as sound by the others in Rome. They were disfellowshipped by the Roman bishop. On what ground? On grounds that we should call orthodox? Far from it. The sympathies of two successive Roman bishops, Victor (189–198) and Zephyrinus (199–217), were given to another view which is called Modalism. This view is an uncritical deification of Jesus. A people who were accustomed to deify rulers and whose minds were familiar with pagan stories of gods appearing in human form had little difficulty and great inducement to simply accept Jesus as God. Only, to save Monotheism, they identified Jesus with the one only God. Father and Son were only names

for different modes of manifestation. Jesus was simply God in the flesh, — God descending to earth in human form. The humanity of Jesus was merely the human body of flesh. For some twenty-eight years this essentially pagan view was favored by the Roman bishops, though the first group which I have mentioned felt that they had the gospels on their side and had an organization and a bishop of their own. In 217 Callistus came to the bishopric of the main group. His sympathy had been with the view called Modalism, but he had to encounter now a vigorous opposition from some whose leaning was to a third conception. This third conception was the first form of that which later became orthodox. It was the view of men who conceived the world as a philosophical problem. How explain the multiplicity of finite and conditioned things from the absolute one? The problem was solved for these men by the aid of a notion begun in pagan Greek philosophy and developed by Alexandrian Jews independently of the Christian movement and even prior to it. It was the notion that from the Absolute Being — from the unconditional and unknowable being — had gone forth an uttered thought to be a second and subordinate representative of the Divine Being. This operative thought or Logos had made the world and the human beings in the world. These philosophic Christians were anxious to establish their monotheistic religion by the guarantee of revelation and they argued that this subordinate Logos personality had found full utterance in Jesus. To call Jesus the Jewish Messiah no longer had meaning in Rome or Carthage. To call his teaching the teaching of Logos gave it the rank of the highest revelation in the finite world according to this theory of the world's origin and government. Now, to reconcile vigorous adherents of this view, the new bishop Callistus in 217

made some cautious concessions. He used the term Logos, and his use of this terminology gave a sanction to that Christology which had the support of the highest scientific or philosophical theory of the world current among educated Christians. From that time on the great influence of the Roman Church was given to this Logos doctrine which viewed Jesus as a human agent or incarnation, not of God himself, not of God the absolute, but of this second and subordinate personality who was supposed to be necessary in order to solve the problem of the origin of the finite from the infinite, of the many from the one. This Logos view won a signal victory about 270, over the older view of Jesus as a man divinely helped. Then a great bishop of Antioch was condemned for what we may call his Unitarian view, and a pagan Roman emperor decided that the church property in Antioch should belong to those who were recognized by the Christian bishop of Rome. After that the terms and phrases of the Logos view were inserted into the simple baptismal creeds of the churches, and the foundations were laid for that development of dogma which found fullest expression in the Council of Chalcedon in 451, and which is the rightful orthodox conception of Christian history. I do not need to go into the story at more length, nor to narrate the changes and important corrections which were made in it. It is enough to have pointed out that the whole orthodox view of Christ, the whole Trinitarian conception which is applied to Him, is seen by the historian to have been the gradual ascendancy of one view over at least two others, and that the victorious view was fundamentally due to an explanation of the universe which no longer finds any scientific or philosophical support. From the beginning, Protestantism has been undoing that victory, for Protestantism has always had playing upon it the great new modern

phase of philosophy which seeks to explain the world without resolving the unity of the divine personality, and does not feel the need of stating the two ideas of God transcending the world and God immanent in the world as two persons in God. Moreover, Protestantism has been undoing that ancient victory of an outworn philosophy because it has tried to state its doctrines by the aid, not of such speculation, but by the aid of religious psychology; and the psychology of religion deals simply with the mysterious fact of man communing with God and aided by God in a mood of worship and reverent submission which is wholly different from metaphysical speculation, and therefore as worship, as religion, knows nothing of that metaphysics which was applied to the nature of Christ. More and more, too, Protestant religion gains the correction of a comparative survey of religion beyond the Christian limits, and is obliged by such instances and comparisons to see the marvellous and precious influence of Jesus in the light of an historic mediation of one who, because he loved righteousness and hated iniquity, was anointed with the oil of gladness above his fellows, and one who, thus exemplifying man's moral personality in its most tragic experience, interprets and inspires our lives with the interpretation of the highest human instance and the inspiration of his highest purity and love.

Now, this historical criticism of the Christian doctrine, produced in the ancient world, and long carried on as inheritance and tradition, this historical criticism with its exhibition of inadequacies and relativities, is in general the work of men who are not affiliated with our organization of Unitarian churches. It is the work of scholars in Germany and France and Holland, who are simply to be described as the scientific and liberal members of churches which have not, as church institutions,

adopted the Unitarian position. Their work is not so much an expression of Unitarianism as an independent confirmation of it. Under the leadership of such eminent students of religion we find Protestantism in general in a wavering and experimental attitude. The question is simply what position will be adopted when the tradition of the Logos doctrine is laid aside. Will it be the ancient modalist view, which sacrifices the humanity of Jesus, except so far as a mere human body was concerned? That would be to sever the possibility of man and the manifestation of God more than Orthodoxy ever did; and yet this position is somewhat confusedly assumed by men like Lyman Abbott. But so long as religion remains, it always has tendencies of its earliest and first creative form. We may be sure that as it more and more frankly lays aside the incumbrance of the speculations imposed late upon its first simplicity, Christianity will revert to that which was the view of Jesus and his first Galilean followers, and that was Unitarianism. True, it was expressed in forms that belonged to an early age and Oriental people, but the forms are easily translated. True, it was shaped to meet other historical issues, but its fundamental principles persist for us. It is Unitarianism in its inspiring estimate of man. It is Unitarianism in its interpretation of the character of God by man's highest conception of his own character. It is Unitarianism by its unmodified assertion of a single personality in God and by its singleness of emphasis upon the religious expression of that personality. It is Unitarianism, too, in its passion for human welfare and human brotherhood and for the control of life by the saving and redeeming aim of a kingdom or family of men who live as pure and loving sons of a Father who is holiness and love.

I am arguing in outline that our Unitarian churches

have assumed a position in religion which proves to be a successful pioneer position from which they can see the leaders of the rest moving to join them. Wherever Unitarian churches are really known, and have manifested to the community their possession of religious earnestness and ability in their conditions of natural freedom and of the simplicity of faith which is essential to religion, they win more and more the adherence and sympathy of thoughtful neighbors. It is our natural desire to see a great extension of our form of religious faith, and we are justly impatient of the conservatism which prevents so many from leaving the old associations which have lost their power and finding a full, free play for themselves in our happy household of faith. When I ask myself what things will work for a larger and speedy extension of Unitarianism as the recognized true form of an enlightened Christianity, I find myself always led to three prescriptions. The first of these concerns all of us. The second concerns some of us. The last, perhaps, lies beyond the control of us all. The first specific counsel of a means for commending Unitarianism to all the world is that we shall find in it and show through it a full religious satisfaction of human needs. Our first impulse when we break away from an erroneous system in religion is simply to show its errors of assertions, and thus to gain an intellectual victory over it. That has its place, but it is not all. We must gain a religious victory over it. We must show that our new system in religion provides for the sin and misery and sorrow of men a help as rich and richer than our old church had to offer. If I did not find that Unitarianism really met these needs of the soul, I should suspect it of being a deficient form of religion. I have not found it so deficient. The cure of all human griefs and failure is God; and in becoming a Unitarian I entered into an

assurance of God as coming into vital union with my human life with an infinite wealth of love and an infinite power and readiness to use my human capacities in his gift of Himself. I won the assurance that He, who moment by moment spoke to me through the power of ideals essential to my own being, and who never withdrew the challenge and solicitation of those ideals, had for my needs the constant forgiveness of a restoring sympathy and love and the constant and eternal care for my being which was my ground for an inward triumph over all calamities and death. I am sure that we all find such assurances, and I mean to plead only that we should proclaim these religious assurances to others with evangelistic fervor, so that none may have cause to think that our churches are only a refuge for troubled reason without the spiritual comfort enjoyed in the old religious home. And when we express these values of our Unitarian religion we shall have done a great service to it; we shall do what the Methodist or the Salvationist has done to evidence his church as one of the vital religious forces of the age.

In the second place, I wish to plead for a higher sense of responsibility to theological science. It should be felt as our duty to conduct with the amplest learning and the most patient toil of criticism and discussion the scientific study of religion that shall clearly disentangle from the great complex of past usages and feelings and conceptions that which is the essential and germinative principle of our religious evolution. It should be our delightful privilege to lead the way to new statements and new valuations of old religious ideas in the light of this permanent essence of the religious movement. That would be the performance of our highest duty to the rest of our Christian brethren; for, tenacious as men are of old and sacred convictions, they need to arrive at new

forms of conviction by a full and convincing argument which is associated in every detail with the elaborate process of their reverent and conservative study. It is our sacred duty to them, for we would not be saved alone. We crave as much as any a spiritually unified society. We aim at a truth which justifies itself to all minds. Only by elaborating this intellectual and learned task of transforming the common religious inheritance can we escape the fate of some of the minor sects, — the fate of standing aloof from general society of religious culture with a few shibboleths which we simply cry aloud without an adequate and convincing interpretation. Such a scientific process centres naturally in a theological school, and surely there can be no better conditions for the preparation of our ministers than the scene of such generous and laborious investigation. As a representative of the only theological school under Unitarian control, I plead for your hearty support of it in its highest ambitions. I beg you to sympathize with the view that such a Unitarian theological school will never have reached its proper stature until it has become the acknowledged leader of liberal schools, and exercises a powerful constraint, not simply upon those that resort to it, but upon every other school in the land.

And now I wish to refer, lastly, to conditions which may hereafter spread Unitarianism more widely in the form of organized fellowship, but which are conditions hardly within our control. When we survey the Protestantism of older lands, it certainly does not seem that the continuance of its older forms of doctrine and practice is due to any preponderance of conviction. We have to remember that in Germany and England the churches are established churches, and that the government of those lands is in the hands of conservative classes. Political conservatism, resisting all modifications in the

social whole, is the powerful support of an ancient Orthodoxy which could hardly maintain any social eminence without it. Could we foresee that the political future of those lands carried with it the disestablishment of the churches, I am confident in my prophecy that among the sweeping religious readjustments, which would insure one of the most striking changes, would be the emergence of organized religious liberalism with which we could affiliate, and which, being now rid of all external constraints of compromise, would be frankly and explicitly of our form of thought and expression. It is only the instinct of political unity which binds conservative and liberal in one religious establishment; and whenever the political factor is eliminated, men will certainly follow nature, and seek to walk together only as they are agreed. That result is the American result of denominations; and I am fain to believe that all the suppressed liberalism of the two most eminent lands in Protestant Europe would exhibit itself in a denomination of the greatest learning and most effective social influence.

That, you will say, is not our time, but the future. It is true; but for that or for any event we have a duty which is present. It is our duty to become internationally known, and to gather into closest sympathy all the liberal elements that to-day are willing to brave the frown and disfavor of authority and fashion. We have already begun such an enterprise. We are stepping out of our isolation, and are cultivating international relations. In 1900, at the anniversary of the American Unitarian Association in Boston, there was formed an international council of Unitarian and other liberal religious thinkers and workers. In May, 1901, meetings were held in London by the invitation of this international council, and a series of notable and inspiring

addresses were made, not only by men from America and England, who are connected with churches called Unitarian, but by representatives of Liberalism in France, Italy, Switzerland, Hungary, Scandinavia, Holland, Germany, and Russia. The success of that great series of meetings was such that we may prepare ourselves to see a great international religious fellowship arise, in which with many differences of organization and administration there will be a spiritual unity of faith and ideals more impressive than the inherited Catholicism, which maintains its unity by a system of coercion and authority and suppression of the free, inquiring mind. The next session of the council will be held on the continent in September, 1903. Who knows but that out of such meetings of men united by the free adoption of the same ethical and religious principles great issues may come? Certainly for us these meetings are a supreme gratification. They make plain to all that our American Unitarianism is not a small local eccentricity, but something for which the rational mind of all lands reaches out, something which is universal and human in its range of adaptability, something which is so simply and widely true to human nature that it can override all limits of nationality and language. Who knows, too, that this international union of spiritual religion may not act as a leaven for the ethical life of all lands? Let me close by the utterance of this great hope in the words of an eloquent Russian, who is active in translating Unitarian literature for circulation in his own land: "Unitarianism has in the past rendered humanity so enormous a service toward the unification of religion by liberating universal truth from the net of irrational and mutually antagonistic superstitions it was entangled in that one naturally longs to see Unitarianism in the future render in the domain of feeling the same service it has hitherto rendered in

the sphere of reason, by participation in the levelling of all those egotistical barriers which prevent men from behaving toward other men as the children of one Heavenly Father inevitably would if only they did indeed realize the brotherhood which unites them."

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AMERICAN UNITARIAN ASSOCIATION
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AMERICAN UNITARIAN ASSOCIATION

25 Beacon Street, Boston

THE American Unitarian Association is the working missionary organization of the Unitarian churches of America. It seeks to promote sympathy and united action among Liberal Christians, and to spread the principles which are believed by Unitarians to be essential to civil and religious liberty and progress and to the attainments of the spiritual life. To this end it supports missionaries, establishes and maintains churches, holds conventions, aids in building meeting-houses, publishes, sells, and gives away books, sermons, tracts, hymn-books, and devotional works.

Tracts descriptive of Unitarian principles, doctrines, and methods, are sent free to any who desire to know what Liberal Christianity stands for and works for. A list of these free tracts will be sent on application. A full descriptive catalogue of the publications of the Association, including doctrinal, devotional, and practical works, will be sent to all who apply. All religious books by Unitarian authors are kept on sale, and will be sent on receipt of price. A list of such books, with prices, will be furnished upon request.

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THE COMMON FAITH.

BY

REV. SAMUEL M. CROTHERS, D.D.

AMERICAN UNITARIAN ASSOCIATION

BOSTON

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The Brotherhood of Man.
The Leadership of Jesus.
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In the love of the truth, and the spirit of Jesus Christ, we unite for the worship of God and the service of man.

Our Declaration

(*As expressed in the By-Laws of the American Unitarian Association*).

"The object of the American Unitarian Association shall be to diffuse the knowledge and promote the interests of pure Christianity; and all Unitarian Christians shall be invited to unite and co-operate with it for that purpose."

(*As expressed by the National Conference of Unitarian and Other Christian Churches, at Saratoga, N. Y., in 1894.*)

"These Churches accept the religion of Jesus, holding, in accordance with his teaching, that practical religion is summed up in love to God and love to man.

"The Conference recognizes the fact that its constituency is Congregational in tradition and polity. Therefore, it declares that nothing in this Constitution is to be construed as an authoritative test; and we cordially invite to our working fellowship any who, while differing from us in belief, are in general sympathy with our spirit and our practical aims."

THE COMMON FAITH.

That I with you may be comforted in you, each of us by the other's faith, both yours and mine. — Romans i. 12.

One of the most pleasant memories which I have of the convention of the Unitarian and other liberal religious thinkers and workers in London is that of a Russian gentleman who gave in very simple fashion his own experience. He had been born into the Greek Church and surrounded by its influences. He had been thrown among people who took certain things in regard to religion for granted. He told us how there came a time when he doubted this faith of his companions and of the society in which he lived. He asked himself, Does the Church as it is to-day represent the ideal of Christ, or may it not be that there has been a mistake? And the more he thought, the more a few simple truths came before his mind. These things, he said to himself, constitute the essence of religion. The dogmas I have received are no longer real to me. Then the interesting part of his confession came. He said that when he made this discovery of the simplicity of the religious life, there suddenly came the thought that he was going mad. "Could it be possible that, of all men living and who had lived for the last eighteen hundred years, I was the only one to understand Christ correctly?" It was madness, he thought, for him to set his individual opinion against all the wisdom and experience of the world. Then he told

of the relief that came when some of our liberal religious literature fell into his hands. Suddenly to him in his loneliness there appeared a great multitude. It was not madness; he was not standing out against the world. There were others who had been thinking as he thought and who had come to substantially the same belief. Thus, he said, the assurance of sanity came to him.

It seems a little strange that a man coming to a belief that is perfectly simple and in itself altogether rational should think of it as a premonition of madness. And yet that is the way great multitudes of people who are thinking their way to any clearer truth alone must feel, do feel. We are hardly conscious of how much we are dependent for our peace of mind on continual contact with the thought of those around us. In our daily life, so far as our ordinary business is concerned, it is very seldom that we have to stand altogether alone and declare an individual conviction against the consciousness of our neighbors, and we do well to doubt ourselves when thus we stand alone. The man in business, when he asks what is practical, is, in fact, all the time consulting with his neighbors; he is closely in touch with the business world; he knows what people are thinking about, what they are likely to do, and he feels content in that knowledge. So in our social life. We are continually talking about all the little things that happen to us. We are comparing our individual standard of propriety with the standards of those about us. Some one has given us the very apt phrase, "the common sense of the crowd," and we do well to doubt ourselves when we fall too far apart from that judgment. We are seeing what other people are seeing, and we are continually correcting ourselves by our neighbor's vision.

Now the aim of a church, of a religious association, is to do for us religiously what the ordinary associations of

society do for us in other matters. It is to give us an opportunity to compare our best thoughts with the best thought of others, and by this continual conference to come to those things which commend themselves to the spiritual nature of man. Out of all conflicts of opinion certain great truths must emerge, and they must become permanent simply because they continue to commend themselves to the spiritual consciousness of humanity. That is the ideal aim of a religious organization, and it is that expressed in the words of Paul, — "That I with you may be comforted in you, each of us by the other's faith, both yours and mine."

If we could get a full, frank expression of what people are actually believing and what they are actually desiring, there would be comfort and strength for every one of us. But just here, because it in one way answers a universal need, has come the great danger of all religious organizations, and that which makes it necessary in these days for us to work for a larger and freer organization than that which we have had in the past. Long ago priests discovered this fact of human nature, that a man is not fully satisfied with his own thought till it has been confirmed by the thought of others. Upon this human need all the great schemes of priestcraft and churchcraft that have held the human mind in bondage have been formed, sometimes consciously, more often unconsciously. You cannot compel a man to think as you will. Thought is an interior thing, and must be free. The Inquisition itself could not compel a man to believe anything. But what can be done is to prohibit a man from freely expressing his doubts, or any convictions which are in opposition to a current creed. You must think as you will: we cannot prevent that, but you may *speak* as we will. Let your private convictions be what they may, when you come together to express your

common thought, then you must speak in some approved form of words. That is all the ecclesiastic asks of men.

Now what happens? If the thinking man finds his individual conviction and his individual way of looking at things in opposition to this required public expression of faith, will his own thought grow to maturity while he yields formal acquiescence to an alien opinion? No; the private thought is stifled because of its lack of expression. In the time of need the man doubts himself. It seems more likely that he should be mistaken than that the great mass of good people about him should be mistaken. Said Mrs. Browning, "Men get opinions as boys learn to read, by repetition chiefly." I think we have all found it to be true that in an emergency it is the thing which voices the common aspiration, and that has had some public expression, that comes with a power and definiteness.

If we ask why it is that in the face of the whole intellectual tendency of our times, in the face sometimes of absolute proof to the contrary, certain beliefs discredited by thought still hold their place in the religious consciousness of the great mass of the people, we must answer: It is because the great mass of people have been taught that the use of individual reason, when it leads to doubt, is of the nature of sin. A man always feels that, unless he has had opportunity to confer freely and frankly with some other mind. I remember very well how after a long struggle I was conscious that I no longer believed my inherited creed. I knew that perfectly well. I was troubled by it, felt that it was something wrong in myself, hated to confess it frankly to another. It seemed as if in some way I had been cut off from the great company of believing, worshipping people throughout the world. Then one day I happened to speak frankly with

a friend about it. I found, to my surprise, that he thought very much as I did. It was nothing peculiar to myself, and after I had expressed my worst heresies they seemed very mild to him. After all, it was not so bad as I thought. And I continually meet persons who are in just that state, distrusting their own best thought, treating it as if it were in the nature of sin.

Now the aim of a truly liberal church is precisely the opposite of that type of church which I have mentioned. Instead of seeking some way by which all men's minds may be conformed to one type, its aim is to so free the mind that men shall talk together just as simply, as naturally, as fully, about the questions of religion as about the questions of every-day life, that there shall be one place where they may confer together, where a man shall be no more ashamed of expressing his doubt or his difference of opinion than he shall of expressing his agreement. And the possibility of unity lies in this, that there are certain great truths which men do see and at heart believe. If we could just come together and express our individual opinions we should be confirmed in our real religious life. Now it is very easy to say this, but I doubt very much whether even in our most liberal churches people realize the full ideal. It is so easy to fall back upon the other principle, that of some sort of authority. Tolstoy tells of a Russian proprietor who had given himself with whole-hearted devotion to the work of uplifting the peasants on his estates. And then he tells how when this man tried to carry out his new thought, instead of being met with gratitude, he was met with suspicion. They wanted to know what ulterior end he had in view; and it took a long time before he gained their confidence. They thought they knew what a proprietor was, they thought they knew that there was always a selfish end, and that this man

was trying to do in a different way just what other men before had been trying to do.

I think that the very word "church," the very name "minister," the very thought of any expression of common faith, has to a great multitude of minds associations which are hostile to the whole idea of liberty. "New presbyter is but the old priest writ large," so Milton said, and men to-day are saying very much the same thing of every attempt at a freer religious organization. There needs to be "line upon line, and precept upon precept," before the ideal of a really free church can be fulfilled. It is very common for people when they meet a minister of religion, of no matter what denomination, to think that he is a person who is very easily shocked by the expression of a difference of opinion. So there is a certain defiant tone in which the man of the world expresses his own individual opinion. I remember meeting in a little town a man who, when he learned that I was a minister, immediately assumed this attitude, and said, "I, sir, am a Buddhist." And then he waited a long time for me to express my disapprobation. For some reason or another he seemed to think that his profession of faith must seem very reprehensible to the ministerial mind. When I conversed with him a little time, I found that what he really meant was that he had ceased to be a Presbyterian.

How many of us have certain theological bugbears! A professor of theology used to have one argument by which he answered all disturbing questions: "Young men, if you follow that line of thought you will find that it leads to materialism, pantheism, atheism, and universal scepticism." It is through such fear of the extremes to which any line of thought may lead that many people are kept from thinking at all. It is dangerous. We express a desire for some new enterprise or association. That, says the cautious man, leads to "Socialism." We express

a desire for more self-reliance, for more individual initiative, for more freedom from repressive government; that leads, on the other hand, to "Anarchy." It is doubtless true that absolute individualism is Anarchy; but the sensible man is in no danger of following his principle to any such conclusion. The principle of association may be carried to an extreme that leaves no room for individual initiative, but the sensible man is likely to stop far short of that. Society is a balance between opposing forces.

Pantheism, atheism, agnosticism, materialism, pessimism, — how many ugly, dangerous words there are in the dictionary, and how many young men imagine that they have all these spiritual diseases when, as a matter of fact, they are only in the way of normal spiritual development. A man comes to say of certain things that are mysterious, of which he thought he knew, "I don't know." Then he labels himself or allows himself to be labelled an "Agnostic." No religious life for him. Another man sees that the great God cannot stand apart from his universe, but must be working in it and through it all. He labels himself "Pantheist," or is so labelled. Another man suddenly discovers the abyss of actual woe in the world, the evil that, for the present at least, is without remedy. He is called a "Pessimist." Another man looks to the right hand and to the left hand, and for the time he sees not God. The final word for him is "Atheist." Now we cannot have a free expression of what people from time to time are actually believing until we get over our fear of all such names. We must have a faith that is wholesome enough and large enough to keep us from being afraid of our own thought. The fact is that we are continually mistaking the passing moods of the spirit for the finalities of thought. These moods through which we pass have been familiar to the most profoundly religious minds.

To believe in God, — do you think that means that at every moment of your life your faith should be stronger than your doubt? Was Jesus an atheist when upon the cross he cried: "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me"? So dark it was at that moment that for him God was not. It was but the passing cloud. When the cloud passed, — "Father, into thy hands I commit my spirit." Do you think that those who have loved men most, sacrificed themselves for men most gladly, have always seen the worth and dignity of mankind? Do you think they have never had their moments of blank despair? The whole literature of religion is full of expressions of despondency, but the religious man is the man who at his best, when the clouds are off his soul, believes and does not despair. If we could take the religious life naturally, simply, instead of labelling people as this or that, as if it were a final thing, we should say: "Here is a man struggling, working, doubting, seeking some truth. Let us ask only for the best thing he has found. This is his contribution to the faith and life of humanity." You find your friends and companions and helpers everywhere throughout the world, not in churches alone, but among all men who have truly striven and truly attained to any measure of peace and life.

And then, just another thing: If we are to have a true expression of the religious life, we must not only free ourselves from the fear of heresy and of doubt, but we must free ourselves also from the fear of worldliness and indifference and scorn. There are certain spiritual faiths and aspirations which we all have, each one in the sanctuary of his own soul, but which we doubt whether our neighbors have. We all of us are more religious than our actions or our words would indicate. We know the faith that comes to us, but we do not know that the

same power and the same strength is in our neighbors. It is so much easier for all of us to express a flippant opinion in society than it is to express a serious opinion. It is very much easier to express a worldly thought than it is a spiritual thought. And so when a person in some time of need feels the impulse of spiritual faith and desire, he is lonely: he feels that there is nothing in the thought of other men to answer to his own. This is what Matthew Arnold expressed in that poem on "The Buried Life," which is so true to every human experience, —

> "I knew the mass of men concealed
> Their thoughts, for fear that if revealed
> They would by other men be met
> With blank indifference, or with blame reproved.
> I knew they lived and moved
> Tricked in disguises, alien to the rest
> Of men, and alien to themselves."

In such disguises every one of us has passed a great part of life. No wonder that men fall into spiritual despair; and the way out of it comes for most of us when we touch the real sources of emotion in others.

> "When our eyes can in another's eyes read clear,
> When our world-deafened ear
> Is by the tones of a loved voice caress'd,
> A bolt is shot back somewhere in the breast,
> And a lost pulse of feeling stirs again."

It is for this that we come together, it is for this that we speak our heart's faith: because it is true that the very best development of the human soul can come to no man alone. His faith in spiritual realities is never serenely confident until it is confirmed by the response which comes from another.

That which is to triumph is not your faith alone, nor mine alone, but each is "comforted by the other's faith, both yours and mine."

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Fourth Series.] [No. 138.

THE GOSPEL OF PERSONALITY

BY

REV. HOWARD N. BROWN.

AMERICAN UNITARIAN ASSOCIATION
BOSTON

Our Faith.

The Fatherhood of God.
The Brotherhood of Man.
The Leadership of Jesus.
Salvation by Character.
The Progress of Mankind,
onward and upward forever.

Typical Covenant of a Unitarian Church.

In the love of the truth, and the spirit of Jesus Christ, we unite for the worship of God and the service of man.

Our Declaration

(*As expressed in the By-Laws of the American Unitarian Association*).

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THE GOSPEL OF PERSONALITY.

Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature.—MARK xvi. 15.

WHAT was that gospel, or "glad tidings," which the first Christian disciples felt entitled and commissioned to proclaim to the inhabitants of all the earth? Was it any message which can be repeated by us to-day with profit to those who are willing to listen, and are we able to preach that gospel, or any good news of the same kind, with authority? Nowhere in early Christian writings is the gospel defined, though everywhere it is taken for granted that Christian believers know perfectly what it is. When anything stands clearly within the view of a large number of people, they do not take the trouble to describe it to each other. We of this later day, however, with reference to that original proclamation, are among those spoken of as being "far off"; and it is only by some kind of definition or description that we get a firm grasp upon the meaning of our Christian faith. Out of this necessity for defining, in some measure, the gospel to be preached, there have sprung, unhappily, endless bitter quarrels in the Church. But it does not seem as if this were any longer necessary when people have come to some real knowledge of the fundamental and essential elements of the gospel

message. No doubt there is plenty of room for disagreement as to what is fundamental and essential; and, furthermore, no very elaborate knowledge of Christian history is required to convince one that many pagan ideas have to be cast out of the mind of Christendom before the real gospel of Christ can be seen and appreciated. But still it is true that those things over which men have fought in the past have been, for the most part, of secondary consequence; and one likes to believe it possible so to set forth the essence of Christian truth that all men, hearing, shall say, "This is, indeed, good news which we would gladly receive as God's truth."

One of the greatest distinguishing marks of the gospel, as first preached to men, was its sense of the infinite worth of personality, both human and divine; and, if we are at pains to consider a little what this signifies, we shall find one of the natural lines of cleavage between Christianity and Paganism, alike in the ancient and in the modern world. This belief in, or perhaps it is better to say this knowledge of, personality, as the supreme fact of existence, is shown in various ways to have been a vital part of the mind of Christ. God was to him not a mere force or influence or name for the totality of things, but a person whom he called the "Father in heaven." "My Father," "your Father," "our Father," he was forever saying; and his teaching about God ascribes to him every attribute of personality with which we are familiar.

This does not imply that he thought of Deity as an individual, with a limited form, like our own bodily presence; though, if he did so think, it is nothing concerning which we need be troubled. Some people

take it upon themselves to be either deeply horrified or much amused if any one to-day thinks of God as having the form and appearance of a venerable man, and yet that simple childlike faith may be ever so much nearer the truth than half the philosophical speculations of our time. For the child, however foolish its pictures of the Almighty, at least believes in a divine person. The philosopher, when he finds that he can make no mental image of the Infinite, too often surrenders the idea of personality altogether, as applied to Deity. Now every person is to our human understanding a fathomless mystery. No picture can be made of that inward spiritual being which each one calls himself. Yet, unless that human being be truly a person, as distinguished from a cunning piece of mechanism, and unless God be a limitless personality, not a mere endless stream of causation, this whole universe is, for our purposes, practically a hollow and heartless creation.

Again, Christ's sense of the value and significance of personality is shown to us by his regard for all mankind. The humblest human being was to him a child of God; that is to say, was a being like God, a being to be regarded with something of the awe and reverence which we pay to the infinite Father of all souls. The only words of anger he ever uttered were addressed to those who "shut up the kingdom of heaven against men," to those who had no sense of the infinite riches contained in the human soul, to prevent them from casting it aside in disdain, if it happened to be somewhat stained and defaced by sin.

On whatever theory we interpret his action, it is certain that Christ died for men, and gave his life a voluntary sacrifice, not because he was filled with pity

for the suffering of a worthless human race, but because, as an old Christian hymn expresses it,

> "Our souls condemned and dying
> Were precious in his sight."

It was no theologian, but our entirely dispassionate New England philosopher, Mr. Emerson, who said that Jesus Christ for the first time appreciated the full value of the soul of man; and it would have been well for the Church if those who had the making of its theology could have seen with equal clearness this key to the great Master's mind and thought.

How Christ arrived at his estimate of the supreme worth of personality we may not be able to say. But we of this time may share something of that sense and feeling if we think of ourselves as the ultimate and highest product of God's work, so far as we know it in the outward universe, and realize a little of the vast expenditure of time and energy by means of which this result has been achieved. For what was the countless host of suns and worlds, filling celestial spaces above us, called into being? If we have courage to say that all this makes up the stage on which our immortal spirits, bearing their Creator's likeness, are brought into being, and trained for an endless life of union and communion with Him, then, in our sight also, these human spirits begin to assume priceless worth. And why should we not say this? No other end of creation half so reasonable can be posited or assumed. In fact, creation has no final purpose whatever which our imagination can grasp, unless all its "groaning and travailing in pain," through the countless ages, has been suffered in expectancy of the "manifestation of the sons of God."

It may be that other worlds than ours are peopled by rational beings, living like us in hope of immortality. If so, then other solar systems do but repeat the plan and purpose of our own; and the conviction is strengthened in our minds that all worlds exist to make a temporary home and abiding-place for free spirits like ourselves. And if we are troubled by the vast multitudes of beings, possibly gifted with the spark of immortal life, as if what had been produced in such countless throngs must be therefore cheap, or as if it puzzled us to explain why God should need or want so much companionship, let us make the forces of nature our parable, to teach us the depth and breadth of the infinite love. The force of gravitation, for example, holds no single atom with a grasp less firm because the sands of the seashore are countless and numberless. No matter how often this or any natural force may be drawn upon, it is as fresh and full in its last pulsation as when the morning stars sang together in the very dawn of time. There can be no weariness or satiety in an infinite love, though the objects of that love be increased throughout endless ages; but to each one among millions the divine regard comes as new and strong as if that were its only child.

Let us think, then, that God, the infinite Person, cares for us who are created in his likeness as he cares for nothing else that he has made. Gold is precious in the sight of men because it has become the sum and the measure of all values. People fight for possession of that metal, they toil for it, and die in the search for it as for no other earthly substance known to them, because having that they can buy everything besides. In some such way ought we to value the supreme

spiritual fact of personal existence. That is the ultimate form and substance into which all spiritual riches are gathered up and coined,— the reality which holds and perpetuates all our blessings. Where there are good men and women, all things become possible; and, where there is little personal worth and power, there the richest gifts of nature lie barren and unutilized.

Now the proclamation that God and man stand together as persons, the transcendent realities of the whole universe, visible and invisible, is forever a proclamation of "good news," if anybody can be made to see and believe that truth. No other tidings will the world receive with such acclaim when it begins to appreciate the significance of the message; and to no generation was this gospel ever preached whose need of it was greater than this present living and breathing world of which we make a part.

For one thing we human beings are, as we always have been, so hugely overmatched, physically, by the mighty frame of nature that without the gospel we are apt to be weighed into the very dust with a sense of our inferiority. It is sometimes said that the new astronomy has greatly reduced man's sense of his own importance. Doubtless our larger ideas of the universe have produced some such result. Yet of old times the wonder and magnitude of the sky were great enough to lead one to exclaim, "When I consider the heavens, the moon and the stars, what is man that thou art mindful of him?" In the day when Christ's gospel was first preached, it was difficult for humanity to put itself on anything like equal terms with that outward world whose mountains, winds, and seas so overtopped its own puny strength,

and whose volcanic upheavals recked so little, now and again, of the slaughter of thousands of human lives. We may admire the grandeur of Nature in her stormy moods, and love the beauty with which she clothes the earth in peaceful days; but whenever self-consciousness puts, in contrast with all this, the physical image of ourselves, we are so small, our life is so frail and so quickly spent, that pity for our race is apt to swallow up all other sentiment.

One thing which Christ did for those who believed on him was to open a door of escape from nature into another realm where humanity can stand in spirit, with the whole of this huge world beneath its feet. He gave the soul courage and faith to say: "This earth was built for me. I am that single tenant placed within it as its rightful lord. It was not worth creating save as my dwelling-place, what time I am being schooled and prepared for an entrance to still higher spheres. Were it to be made a question whether this spiritual life of mine or the great sun in the heavens should be resolved back into nothingness, then it were better and more just that the flaming sun should cease to be, so that my soul might live."

The gospel of Christ gave men power and privilege to think like this; and of that same gospel this age of ours, dwelling heavy-hearted amid its triumphs and splendors, has infinite need. The stage upon which the drama of our life is being enacted has come to be greatly more wonderful to us than in the sight of any that have gone before. If, then, we may still think and feel that it is above all else the stage whereon God's children play their part, our new knowledge will increase the sense of the value of that life for which such preparation has been made. Otherwise,

our personal existence sinks in the scale of comparison, and we are depressed by a sense of its little worth.

Another thing which the gospel of Christ did for men was to lift them out of that prison within which their own system-making understanding always tends to shut them up. One way or another, this understanding, in defiance of the testimony of consciousness, is forever busy constructing the picture of some great mechanism of things whose working it can comprehend, and by which, with all the rest, the action of mankind is governed. Our moral sense tells us without ceasing that we are free. "Not so," says the understanding. "You may seem to be free; but, like all else, you do what the great system compels you to undertake and perform." So arrogant has the intellect become in these later days that it often assumes as a proven fact that mechanical universe which is no more than its own pure assumption. And so boldly is the assertion made that other men, thinking they must accept it, have tried to adjust religion to that basis. To "infinite law and order" they therefore sing their hymns and address their prayers. And they appear to think that, in ridding themselves of belief in miracle, in doing away with the free King of heaven, to fill his place with what may be called an apotheosis of system and red tape, they have accomplished for themselves and for mankind the great deliverance. Now belief in miracle is of no considerable consequence to anybody, otherwise than as that has been the form which belief in personal government of the world has hitherto taken. Being so considered, however, it is plain enough that modern thought will not be able to demolish belief in miracle with any weapon it has yet constructed, so long as it leaves the

world without a personal Governor and King. The mind of our race is bound to hold to the supremacy of personality and of personal force. It has an instinct deeper than reason which forever teaches it to cling fast to that insight; for the world, as nothing but a machine, becomes at last an intolerable prison to the human spirit, no matter how perfect its contrivances may be. Tell me that endless progress is before me, that my spirit grows as grows the tree, that step by step I am to be carried upward and onward forever, but tell me no more than this, and presently I find that, however beautiful the system may be, I am Ariel, shut up in the cleft of riven pine; and I long for some Prospero to come and set me free.

The very essence of our earthly manhood is civil and religious liberty. And he who robs me of the freedom of my spirit takes from me the whole substance and foundation of my personal existence. I am a free being, free even as respects the great God himself, so that I can rebel against him and thwart his purpose so far as my own life is concerned. This I am, or I remain no more than a slave; and a slave even of the most benevolent despotism, though it were the perfect rule of the Almighty, knows himself to be defrauded of the greatest gift his Creator has designed for him. The speculations of the intellect may do their utmost to bribe or overawe me, as the champions of Cæsarism in society are always promising better food and raiment if men will give up struggling to be free. But, while conscience speaks to me its rebuke and its praise for what I have done, I will believe that I am truly the author of my own deeds, though I satisfy myself of no other certainty. It can avail me nothing to make all gains besides, if I must thereby

lose my soul. And, in effect, I have lost my soul when I have come to think of myself no longer as a free personality, but as a mere predetermined succession of differing states of consciousness.

To what extent mechanical interpretations of life have displaced the old thought of a personal universe, and just what difference this makes in the mood and behavior of the common mind, it may be difficult to say. One suspects, however, that the change has gone very far. And though in the end it must prove impossible to drive the reason of mankind from that moral basis to which it is firmly anchored, yet opposing beliefs may be responsible for the difference frequently to be observed between a meagre and an abounding tide of moral and religious life. In all outward affairs the emphasis seems to lie at present upon the effort to furnish the man with a more perfect machine, rather than on the attempt to find for the machine a man sufficiently wise and good to use it for the highest purposes. Does not this indicate one conspicuous weakness of modern life which remains to be corrected before we can reap the full advantage of our great increase in knowledge?

Our age has partially forgotten that personality remains always the predominant fact of existence. It cherishes too much the foolish belief in a system of divine government so perfect that it needs no Deity to manage and control it. The effect of that belief is to inspire doubts of the reality of the moral strife to which we here seem to be committed. For of what avail is our endeavor if the interlocked wheels of fate are already set and preordained to deliver a certain product at the end of days? And if God is to do everything, what is there left for us to attempt?

Because people have come to entertain this theory of the sufficiency of a mere mechanical universe, they shut away from their sight the great tragedy of human existence. Of course, nobody can be lost, and probably the suffering of the world is not so very bad, if we are to think of existence merely as a kind of divine contrivance for getting all souls to heaven at last. This whole mechanical tendency has at last reached its logical culmination in an absurd philosophy, which openly denies the real existence of evil; and now it is to be hoped that, seeing the end of that pathway, the world will turn back to the higher witness of its better self. For conscience tells me, not alone that God is creating me in his likeness, but that he is helping me to create myself after the pattern which he has shown me. The liberty and the obligation to do this distinguish me forever, as a person, from things which cannot be self-made. If I succeed in what God asks of me as his child, then have I won a glorious triumph, and deserved a great reward; and if through cowardice and selfishness I altogether fail, then must I taste a bitterness that is worse than death. So does Christianity bid men understand that life is real and earnest, that its risks are no mere painted show of dangers, just sufficient to frighten the foolish and unwary, but are grim and terrible realities, because it is only through such wrestlings and encounters that the sons of God can prove their birthright and their fealty.

Three sublime ideas the Christian faith has set in the forefront of man's consciousness, wherever its sway extends: the idea of God as the Father of souls; the idea of the spiritual man as a child of the Infinite and Almighty; the idea of an immanent, all-pervading Holy Spirit, which brings these two into closest inti-

macy and communion. And these three ideas Christianity has filled and saturated with the thought of personality. Its method of doing this may have been imperfect. The dogmas it has taught may be open to criticism. Nevertheless, the heart of its purpose was true and sound. For these great ideas contain the spirit and the genius of the teaching of Christ, and they are far more important to mankind than all other knowledge it possesses.

To preach this gospel, even to an unbelieving age, is a sublime vocation. Though the world may not give much heed, he who has heard and understood the message knows it to be the real foundation and beginning of man's higher life. The unconscious heart will often respond to it, while the conscious mind is busy with quite other thoughts ; and though they be few, out of many millions, who speak the good news of God, yet must the tidings spread till knowledge of these divine truths shall cover the earth, as waters cover the sea.

APOSTLES' CREED, THE

An Analysis of its Clauses with Reference to their Credibility. By Archibald Hopkins

Size, 5 1-4 x 7 3-4 inches; pages, 207; price, 60 cents *net;* postage, 9 cents.

A THOROUGHLY sane, thoughtful, and discriminating examination of the Apostles' Creed, clause by clause. The special treatment in this volume is that of a layman applying principles of common sense and of clear, logical, untechnical processes of thought to the problems involved. It is a fearless, sincere search after truth, without shrinking from results, and a forcible statement of conclusions and the reasons therefor, expressed in language wholly free from theological or philosophical terms. The author is iconoclastic only for the sake of becoming constructive in the end: he seeks to remove wholly the old, already crumbling structure of dogma only for the purpose of securing the foundation of a rational and more enduring religious belief. The book is, in effect, a plea for a larger, freer, intellectual outlook, and a more hopeful and inspiring religious faith than any creed can supply.

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Size, 4 1-2 x 6; pages, 175; price, cloth, 35 cents *net;* postage, 5 cents; price, paper, 25 cents *net;* postage, 4 cents.

THESE are expositions of distinctive Unitarian beliefs, expressing reverent love of God, abiding faith in humanity, sincere admiration of the human personality, and noble example of Jesus. The polemical element is notably lacking from these discourses, while they are full of the spirit of moral earnestness that makes them appeal for a hearing to Christians of all creeds. The subjects and authors are: I. The Universal and the Special in Christianity, by Frederic H. Hedge; II. The Bible, by James Freeman Clarke; III. God, by Andrew P. Peabody; IV. Jesus Christ, by Brooke Herford; V. Man, by George W. Briggs; VI. The Church: The Society which Jesus gathered, by Rufus Ellis; VII. The Life Eternal—Heaven and Hell, by Samuel R. Calthrop.

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25 Beacon Street, Boston

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FOURTH SERIES.] [No. 139.

JESUS AS HUMANITY'S IDEAL.

BY

REV. J. T. SUNDERLAND.

AMERICAN UNITARIAN ASSOCIATION
BOSTON

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JESUS AS HUMANITY'S IDEAL.

"Looking unto Jesus."—*Epistle to the Hebrews.*

"And I, if I be lifted up, will draw all men unto me."—*Jesus.*

"Was Christ a man like us? Ah! let us try
If we too, then, can be such men as he!"—*Matthew Arnold.*

It is hardly possible to estimate the power of ideals in human life. I am disposed to think there is no one who does not *have* his ideals, conscious or unconscious. Some there may be who are not clearly *aware* that they possess them, just as we all breathe and do many other things which we are not conscious of. But I am disposed to think that absolutely every human being really does have, hung on the walls of that room of his mind where dwells the wonderful faculty which we call the imagination, pictures, dim or clear, of what seems to him the most desirable kind of life—pictures of persons, whom perhaps he knows, or may be has known in some past time, or if not that then persons dreamed of, who represent to his thought the kind of life he would like to be able to live.

It is these pictures that largely shape men's conduct, just as the painter's mental conception of what he wishes to embody guides his brush, and makes the picture he paints turn out this or that. As the courses of ships over the sea are determined by the ports they seek, so are men's careers and characters determined by their ideals.

We have all read tales of persons led on, perhaps to some great good, or perhaps to their distruction, by a vision of some beautiful, may be some seemingly angelic form, appearing to them and beckoning them to follow its lead. These legends are really pictures of our own histories. We are all following visions—we go through the world following visions, angelic or devilish, that lead us up or down—to

salvation or ruin. These visions are nothing less nor more than our ideals.

Fortunate the persons who early in life form noble ideals! Fortunate those boys and girls who are blessed with *parents* so wise and true as to become ideals to go before them, as the star before the wise men from the East, and not by commanding but by gracious shining guide the young feet in wisdom's ways. Happy the young who find *teachers* so noble and inspiring as to become to them ideals!

He who reads the history of Rugby school when Arnold was its Head Master and thinks what a place that fine and chivalric spirit made for himself in the hearts and lives of the hundreds of young men who came under his influence, will know what I mean when I speak of a teacher wise and noble enough to become an ideal to the young.

Happy are they who find worthy ideals in books! But woe to young men or women who read books that give them ideals that are false and morally unworthy!

The great patriots, heroes and benefactors of the world perhaps do their greatest good to mankind, not while they live, by their actual deeds, but after they are dead, by becoming the ideals and inspirers of those who come after them.

In the same way, conspicuous and brilliant bad men and women are likely to harm the world most by vitiating its ideals.

Undoubtedly the world's greatest creator of lofty and inspiring ideals is religion.

The galaxy of noble characters that religion has lifted up before men for their emulation is large and rich. And even in cases where those lifted up had in their actual lives many imperfections, religion in lifting them up usually idealizes them, so that what she points men to for their emulation is likely to be high and pure.

There are few to dispute the claim that the very loftiest ideal of life and character that religion has ever given the world is that which we have in Jesus of Nazareth.

In saying this I do not mean to disparage other biblical characters, as Moses and Isaiah and Paul. Certainly these were great and noble persons; and the reverence that men have paid them has been not only deserved, but it has been elevating and ennobling to those who have paid it. Yet few certainly would think of claiming either of these men as the equal of Jesus.

Neither would I wish for a moment to drop out of sight or disparage such great and honored religious teachers outside of Jewish and Christian history, as Socrates, Marcus Aurelius, Zoroaster, Confucius, Buddha, and even Mahomet. Marcus Aurelius is certainly one of the finest religious spirits of the world. So, in many respects, is Socrates. Mahomet is a strong character, with some fine traits, and it is not difficult to see how he obtained a personal following, and became an ideal to millions; though when we to-day place him beside the other religious teachers whom I have named, it is easy to see that he is morally and spiritually, if not intellectually, their inferior. Zoroaster is veiled in much historic obscurity: yet there seems to be ground for believing that he was a pure and lofty soul that taught one of the purest and loftiest forms of religion that the world has ever known. Confucius was an exalted character, worthy of admiration not only from the Chinese but from all men. And if his teaching was hardly more than *morality, lacking* certain essential elements of *religion*, at least we must confess that as morality it is high and worthy. Buddha was a character exceedingly winning. True, the outcome of his religious thought is dismal, but as a man he undoubtedly stood on a very lofty height. His unselfishness seems perfect; his sympathy with humanity has perhaps never been surpassed. I do not wonder that he became an object of enthusiastic admiration and finally of worship to a large section of mankind.

But, by the side of all these noble characters, we need not fear to place the great Galilean. It used to be feared by some that a study of the other great religions of the world and their prophets and teachers might dim the lustre

of our own. But the fear has proved groundless; at least it has proved groundless so far as the character and teachings of Jesus are concerned. Wherever knowledge of him has gone he has won the homage of mankind. To see him has been to confess the beauty and greatness of his life. Men do not need to prove to others that the sun gives light, or that it is superior in brilliancy to the moon, or stars, or a camp fire. Let each shine; that settles it all. So it has been with Jesus among the world's great religious teachers.

And now, does any one fail to see the moral value there is to mankind in having such men as all these that I have named, lifted up into the positions of examples and moral ideals to their fellows? We may object to their being accounted gods, and worshiped, as has been the case with Buddha and Jesus; for thus religion becomes degraded into superstition. But all that can be done to lift up pure and noble *human ideals*, and to lift them up in connection with religion, as object lessons and shining examples for men in their upward striving, is surely good. Better could the world afford to have its stars of first magnitude stripped from its physical firmament than its great moral and spiritual saints and prophets from the sky of its ideal life.

Let us ask the question with some definiteness, just how it is that Jesus has benefitted the world.

The benefit which Jesus has conferred, and is conferring, upon mankind, I believe to be primarily two-fold: first, that of a teacher; second, and even more important, that of inspirer.

As a teacher of truth he certainly occupies a very lofty place in the world—a place probably second to none. The truths about which he concerned himself were of the very first order: they were the truths of the soul, those truths which pertain to the strengthening, the enlarging, the ennobling of man's nature. Such truths must always be ranked as of the highest importance.

True, much that he taught had been set forth more or less clearly by Jewish prophets and seers before him, and even by great teachers of other nations; for no age or race

has a monopoly of light or knowledge; and, as Paul says, God hath not left himself without witness in any land. Truth is a plant: its seed is dropped often from an unknown source; the winds and rains born of many climes water it; the sun over all gives it warmth. So it grows, and by and by blossoms, and at last bears fruit. Thus the truth that rose to finest blossoming and most perfect fruitage in Jesus was from seed sown, God only knows how far back in the world's spiritual history, and nourished by influences, God only knows from how many ages and lands. All we can say is that the vision, which others before him had seen in part, it was given him to see more perfectly; the words which they had spoken stammeringly it was given him to speak with such clearness and grace and power that they thrilled all who heard, and took their place at once as a part of the richest treasure of the world's moral and spiritual wisdom.

And yet, important and even revolutionary as were his teachings, especially his teaching of God's Fatherhood and men's brotherhood, I think his life—his life culminating as it did in his heroic martyr death—was more important and powerful still, both in its influence upon those who knew him and those who came after him. His utterances alone—at least as they are reported to us—can by no means account for the profound impression he made upon his time and the powerful religious movement he was able to set in operation in the world. It is plain, judging from the biographies we have of him and from the effects that have flowed from his life, that he must have been a singularly strong, unselfish, loving and heroic soul,—possessed of a character both winning and commanding in the very highest degree.

This would seem to be the rational explanation of what certainly happened. For no sooner was he dead and gone out of their sight than he became to his disciples and followers their ideal. They did not worship him; on the contrary they spoke of him steadily as a man; but their enthusiasm for him and their sense of his nobleness and worth

seemed to overtop every other feeling, and their loyalty rose to such a pitch of enthusiasm,—steady, unflagging enthusiasm,—that they would willingly die for the things he taught, and for the honor of his name.

Nor did this personal loyalty and devotion stop with his immediate followers, but it communicated itself to those who came after them. The ideal which had risen with such splendor before their eyes, and with such power over their lives, they were able to bequeath to their children and the generations following; indeed it has never faded or lost its charm and power; rather, has it extended its influence; from being the ideal of simply a handful of personal followers, becoming the ideal of thousands, of millions, of nations, of races, until unquestionably, to-day it, more than any other, is the ideal of the civilized world.

Here, then, I think it is, that we find the way in which Jesus has most benefitted the world. He not only taught truth—truth the loftiest and most important that the mind can conceive—but, what was vastly more important, he lived it, and thus became its incarnation among men. Truth merely spoken is ever comparatively cold and dead. Live it, and you increase its generating power a hundred fold. Character impresses as no words ever can. He who speaks truth is a voice—nothing more. He who lives truth becomes an example, an ideal; and it is ideals that move men with a power greater than any other known in the moral world, lifting them upward and ever more upward if the ideals are noble, but dragging them downward and ever more downward if the ideals are base.

Notice some of the lower ideals which compete with the Christ ideal in the world—ideals which degrade and injure men, but which the ideal which we have in Jesus tends ever to correct.

One of these lower ideals is the *military*. How many ages have been dominated by the thought of military glory! The man before whom all bowed was the great captain. The career to which the young man looked as the most attractive and glorious that his imagination could paint was

that of the hero in battle or the commander of armies.

Even in Christian ages and lands this military ideal has been a widely prevailing one. And yet ever, even when the war spirit has run highest, another ideal has lifted itself up silently, by the side of that of conquest and blood and glory. It has been the ideal of the gentle Christ, who said, "put up thy sword";—the Christ whose whole life was love; at whose birth-hour the legend says angels sung, "peace on earth, good will to men." Cruel enough has been the havoc of war since Jesus lived and died. But who can tell how much worse it would have been, had not the ideal of the Prince of Peace, of him who loved even his enemies, and who, when he was reviled, reviled not again, hung as a sacred image in the thought and heart of thousands, to restrain their cruelty, and to woo them to mercy and peace! It is sad to think how much of war there is yet, even in Christendom, and how many professedly Christian nations are armed camps. And yet to-day it is plain that the military hero nowhere stands in so high honor as once he did. Just in the degree in which the Christ ideal rises in its beauty, the military ideal shrinks away out of sight, as an ugly, horrible thing of the darkness.

The military ideal has had in this century an unfortunate revival, mainly as the result of the career of one man. Near the beginning of the century there arose in Europe an extraordinary military genius. From the humblest position he quickly leaped to the head of the armies of a great nation. Then the ambition fired him to become the conqueror of Europe and the world. He led his armies in all directions. Nothing could stand against him. Thrones tottered and fell. Nations threw themselves at his feet. At last, however, his conquests came to an end, but not until death had reaped its harvest of millions of the best lives of the civilized world.

This extraordinary career of Napoleon raised high once more in Europe the waning military ideal of life. To-day all Europe is an armed camp. France now has an army larger than ever Napoleon led. Germany compels every able-

bodied man within the limits of the empire to give some of the best years of his life to the army. Nearly every other nation of Christendom follows in the wake of these. So that everywhere in Europe taxation and militarism have become a burden almost too great to be borne.

In all this we see the terrible effect of a false ideal of life, set up by a brilliant and bad man. This military ideal which Napolean bequeathed to France and Europe cannot always last; but it is terrible while it does last, and no one can tell the suffering that is likely to come before Europe recovers from this set back, this reversion for the time being to a lower type of political and social life. But the Christ ideal—though hidden out of sight for a time by forts and cannon and the paraphernalia of war, is not dead; nor can it die. It is God's ideal; it is humanity's true, eternally true, ideal; therefore men cannot permanently rest in anything lower or poorer.

Another low ideal of life, which is even more wide-spread than the military, and which, equally with it, wars with that which we see in Christ, is that of *wealth-getting*,—I mean wealth-getting for mere wealth's sake, or for ends of selfishness.

The wealth-ideal is a very facinating one to-day, particularly in this country. Young men around us look up to the millionaire with something of the same envy that the youth of three or four hundred years ago looked up to the knight, or the baron, or the great captain. Perhaps the temptation to sell one's soul for wealth, that is, to let character and manhood go for the sake of getting wealth, was never greater than now. But it must be resisted.

Not that wealth is necessarily an evil. If honestly obtained, held as subordinate to things that are higher, and used for worthy ends, it is a good. But he who has come to think of the getting of it as the supreme object of life, is far on the way toward perdition, if he has not already crossed its threshold.

The gospels give us a legend of certain temptations that were said to have come upon Jesus, from the devil. One

part of the legend runs: "The devil taketh him up into an exceeding high mountain, and showeth him all the kingdoms of the world and the glory of them: and he saith unto him: All these things will I give thee, if thou wilt fall down and worship me." A very small price to pay, surely, for such boundless possessions! Did Jesus yield? Sternly he replied, "Get thee hence, Satan." Here is a lesson for millions to-day. The true man must say, "Get thee hence, Satan," to many an offer of wealth, and honor, and preferment, and worldly good that involves dishonor. In the stillness of the night the Christ-ideal speaks to you and me and all men saying: "He that seeketh to save his life (that is, liveth for self) shall lose it; but he that loseth his life for truth and right and duty, shall save it."

Another ideal of life, closely related to wealth-getting, is that of *pleasure seeking*. But a greater delusion never fell upon men than that of thinking pleasure a worthy, or in any sense whatever a satisfying object to live for. To live for pleasure is to chase a mirage, and die famished in a desert. But he who lives the life of the Christ-ideal will, with this ideal, find the noblest and most enduring pleasures that this world has to give. He will not find them, however, because he selfishly seeks for them, but because, forgetting self, he lives for love and duty and God.

One great value of the Christ-ideal is that it forms a standard whereby to test all the false and the doubtful ideals of the world. If I set my clock by my neighbor's it will not be at all certain to be right. But if we both set our clocks by the sun, neither will be likely to be far wrong.

The great tendency among men everywhere is to follow the standards and ideals that are dominant in the particular society in which they happen to move. It is a great thing to have a standard that overtops my little circle and yours, that can be seen from community to community, from nation to nation, from age to age. Such a standard has the Christ life come to be. Not because anybody has decreed that it should be so, but because that life is in itself so intrinsically beautiful that when men have seen it

they have felt its beauty, and enshrined it in their hearts.

It has been urged that the final standard in all judgments is the "consensus of the competent." Very well, in Jesus we have the consensus of the competent objectivized in matters religious, just as in Shakespeare, Beethoven and Angelo we have the consensus of the competent objectivized in matters poetical, musical, and artistic. The world seeks for its best. When the men and women whose judgments are of most value, everywhere, with almost perfect unanimity point to Angelo in art, and say, "He is best," and to Beethoven in music and Shakespeare in poetry and say, "They are best," we gladly accept the verdict, lift them up into places of honor, become learners of them, make what they have done a standard, whereby to test and measure and correct our poorer work. So it is in morals and religion. Here too we ask, "Who is best?" that here also as in art and poetry and music we may have our ideals and standards and masters to teach us. With a unaminity quite as great as in the cases already referred to, the word comes back, "Jesus is best." And so we take his life and lift it up on high, and say, "It shall be a standard by which we will correct the lower and poorer standards which we have set up for ourselves; it shall be an ideal to inspire us to better things than we have yet reached; it shall be a luminary in our sky in the light of which we will walk."

"As when the valleys all in shadow lie,
And shadowy shapes of fear still haunt the night,
Some mountain-peak reflects the coming light,
And waiting lips break forth with joyful cry
For gladness that at last the day is nigh,—
So when some soul, that towers afar, is bright,
The souls that sit in shadow, at the sight
Grow sudden glad to know *'tis light on high!*

"And when these mountain-towering men can say,
'They see, though it be hidden from our eyes,'
We can believe in better things to be!
So, though the shadows still obscure our way,
We see the light, reflecting from the skies,
That crowns thy brows, O Man of Galilee!"

Thus it is that in his light we see light. Thus it is that in his light the ages have been walking, and shall walk, finding safety, and wisdom and great hope.

Quite the saddest and darkest side of Christian history is that which records the wanderings of the church away from the simple Christ ideal. For centuries the church called by Christ's name, strayed away into deserts and wildernesses of forms, ceremonies, theological speculations and dogmas utterly foreign to the teachings and the life of him from whom Christianity came. Nor are those wanderings over yet.

Hence the continued barrenness of the Church as regards practical fruit. Hence too its pitiful divisions into warring sects and factions, where should be one great brotherhood of good works and peace.

To-day there is nothing in Christendom more hopeful than the signs appearing in a few quarters at least, of a desire to return from these disastrous wanderings to the simple and beautiful Christ-ideal again.

No unimportant part of the mission of the Church that calls us together for worship here this morning, and of the whole Unitarian fellowship which it represents, is to do what they can to help bring about such a return. This has been a distinct and constant aim of the Unitarian movement from the beginning. And this aim it can never relinquish until it is attained, until Christianity, freed from its long slavery to creeds and ecclesiastical systems that Jesus did not teach, becomes once more the simple religion of love and duty, which its great founder taught and lived, and which in him so charmed the world.

Oh, for a new revelation of the Christ-life to men! It would transform the church. It would win mankind. Who could resist it? Who would desire to resist it, any more than to resist the beauty of flowers, or the light of day?

For the theological Christ the world has no need. Too long has that abstraction, that spectre, created by the minds of priests and dogmatists, darkened and cursed religion.

But for the real human Christ who lived and taught in

Galilee; the Christ of the Sermon on the Mount, and the Golden Rule, and the incomparable Parables; the Christ who loved his fellow men so tenderly, alike the rich and the poor, the good and the bad, and spent his life going about doing good; the Christ who was faithful in all duty —faithful even unto death; the Christ who had such matchless power to impress himself upon others, communicating to them his spirit, and making them to feel the beauty of holiness, the nearness of God, and the devineness of humanity; the Christ who has been the inspiration of so much of the world's best beneficence, bravest deeds, and loftiest consecration, in all the ages since he trod the earth; the Christ whose life among his fellows was so transcendently pure and noble that those who saw it lifted it up on high as an ideal for themselves and for all men—for that Christ, the world, the Christian Church, and all of us as individuals, have a need greater than any language of mine can tell.

I took as my text the words, "Looking unto Jesus." It is not speaking extravagance, but only what the experience of eighteen centuries confirms as the simplest truth, when I say, that the world has never found any other human source of inspiration and strength to which it can look with so much profit.

And his help is for all. It is for rich and poor; it is for the strongest and the weakest. It is for you and me. Let us avail ourselves of it. In our temptations, our discouragements, our perplexities, our fears, our sorrows, we may look to him and find in his example new courage and hope; we may touch him and draw from him new moral life and power.

No, friends, it has not been an accident or a mistake that has caused so large a part of the world to choose as its ideal of life, and its leader in the things of the spirit, the prophet of Nazareth, the martyr of Jerusalem. May we all be wise enough to shape our lives in the light of his.

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25 Beacon Street, Boston

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RELIGION.

BY

CHARLES W. ELIOT, LL.D.

AMERICAN UNITARIAN ASSOCIATION
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RELIGION.*

Mr. President, Ladies and Gentlemen,— Religion, in our view, is not a matter of interest chiefly for the serious moments of life: it is not to be reserved, in the main, for such grave occasions as marriage or the birth of children, or for great disasters or sorrows, or for the approach of death. It is the whole atmosphere of life: it is the foundation of character. It is not a gush of feeling or a sudden outburst of enthusiasm. It should be a still, steady glow. Is there any subject of thought in the whole world concerning which there is greater need of clearness and candor? I cannot imagine any topic of human inquiry in which there is such an intense need of perfect freedom from self-deceit and from confusion of mind. This is the topic to which I would invite your attention for a few moments.

Some one will at once object that religion is a sentiment, and that sentiments are unreasoning things. It is true that religion is a sentiment. That means that religion is one of the prime motives of conduct and one of the great moving powers of the world. The great powers of the world are all sentiments. You

* This address was given before the Young People's Religious Union in their meeting of Anniversary Week, 1902.

may read in Professor James's last book — "The Varieties of Religious Experience" — that the two realest things in the world are personality and the sentiments entertained by personalities. These sentiments are things more truly real than mountain or ocean or forest or town. My son, who is now president of the American Unitarian Association, exhibited in early manhood some business capacity; and an old friend of mine, who thought he had best go into railroad work, offered him a position on the railroad of which he was president. After reflection my son declined the offer, saying that he meant to study for the ministry. Whereupon my good friend said to him: "You don't mean to say that you are going to be a minister? I thought you were going in for something real." My son did go in for something real, the realest thing in the world, — influence over ruling sentiments.

That religion is a sentiment, therefore, is no reason why it should not be the subject of the clearest thought. How a few sentiments control our individual lives, — sentiments that have controlled the whole development of the human race, — the love between man and woman, the love of children, the love of parents, clan, home, and country! These are the moving sentiments which history shows to govern all peoples. Shall we dispense with clear thinking about these sentiments? Shall we not endeavor to think clearly about the love of children, for example, that we may learn to discriminate between the wise and the foolish love, that we may learn how to make that exquisite affection tenderer, purer, and more effectual? Never permit any one to convince you that it is an excuse for obscurity of thought concerning religion that religion is a sentiment.

Another objection often raised to clear thought in religion is that religion is a mystery. This objection is urged, first, by persons who wish to swallow religious mysteries whole, and, secondly, by persons who object to all religion because it is mysterious. Now religion is a mystery,—a real mystery. But that is no reason that we should not think about it with a perfect candor and clearness. Indeed, the things that are most worth inquiring into in this world are all uncertainties, problems, and mysteries. A thing that is already certain is not worth long thinking about. It is the doubtful things that you need to probe and reflect on. When you have once learned that the sum of the angles of a triangle is equal to two right angles, you do not need to think any more about that dull but useful truth; but, if you have on your hands, as our country now has, a formidable moral problem,—our duty to millions of semi-civilized and savage people in the Philippines, for example,—you have every possible reason for thinking about it, for studying it, for bringing to its solution every power of clear thought you have. I think we shall all admit on reflection that there is little worth thinking long about except the uncertain, the doubtful, the problematical, the mysterious. Moreover, is there any difficulty in thinking clearly round about the mysterious? If there is any insuperable difficulty, we simply cannot get on in this world; because we are absolutely immersed in mystery, and the things we call practical or real in the plainest sense of those words are almost all mysteries. Take, for instance, the power that lights us in this meeting-house at this moment. Not a man ever breathed who had the faintest idea of the nature of electricity. It is an absolute mystery, root and

branch, from beginning to end. Never has any mortal man had a clear idea of the nature of electricity. It is called by a multitude of names; but the name that the Cambridge motorman gave to it when he first turned his crank is just as good as any scientific name given it. He called it the "juice." We have actually applied it to our service in innumerable ways, but its essential nature remains as perfect a mystery as ever. We have not the least conception of how a single blade of wheat springs from the ground, elaborates its essential parts, and grows; and in all probability we never shall have. We have not the least idea how the colors on the robin's breast have been transmitted from generation to generation for thousands of years without any perceptible change in the colors, the tints of every feather perpetuated through the formless, colorless, microscopic atom by which one robin transmits to another generation of robins, year after year, generation after generation, century after century, and epoch after epoch, the marks and qualities of the species. Forever are the colors on the breast of the bird perpetuated; and we cannot conceive how it is done. I say we are absolutely immersed in mystery in our daily lives, amid all our most practical affairs, amid all the things we call real. Yet we utilize these mysteries by clear, bold thinking. Therefore let us not excuse ourselves for lack of clear thought about religion on the ground that it is mysterious.

But, again, let us be careful never to pretend to believe a mystery. That is not the right attitude of the mind toward the unknown. How do we treat the more familiar mysteries, — electricity, for example? We apply to actual uses, and to the discovery of new applications, every particle of knowledge we have

concerning that essentially unknown force; and we seek every day to acquire an atom more of applicable knowledge. The scientific man never pretends that he understands the fundamental nature of the mystery he studies, never believes he knows not what; yet he thinks clearly about it. That scientific frame of mind accounts for the extraordinary progress of mankind during the last hundred years in the daily use of powers mysterious. And that is precisely the way we should approach and deal with the religious mystery.

Then let us always be careful to observe the distinction between a mystery — a genuine mystery — and a mystification. That is a very important distinction. God has surrounded us with mysteries; but it is man that has made mystifications. There are real mysteries in the conduct of the universe at which we must look bravely and resignedly, with humble minds. Such are useless pain, the sufferings of the innocent, the shortness of human life, the broken career, and premature death. These are real mysteries in the presence of which we must often be dumb. But there are many things in this world that are called mysteries which, in fact, are only human mystifications; and among them are the chief theological doctrines built up by men round about the teachings of Jesus. I refer of course to such purely human inventions as the doctrines of transubstantiation, justification by faith, the Trinity, and the numerous other theological devices of human logic applied to premises altogether of human selection. Give a very fallible but opinionated creature the power to select his premises, and then to apply to them his own logic, and we must not be surprised if he often arrives at a mystification or a paradox which

he erects into a dogma. Therefore let us keep clearly in our own minds the distinction between a genuine mystery and a mystification.

Again, it is important for us, I think, to bear in mind that religion is after all the result of human experience and observation. That is to say, what is held to be true in religion at any stage in the world's progress is the result of the observation and experience of the human race up to that epoch. The different races of the world have had different opportunities of observation and different experiences. So we find different religious systems as the results of these different opportunities of observation and experience. The best religions are the results of the best observations and experiences; and the worst, the lowest, are the results of only savage or barbaric observations and experiences. In each individual man his religion is a reflection of his own experience and observation, and of himself. You remember what it says in our Sacred Book: "With the merciful thou wilt shew thyself merciful; with an upright man thou wilt shew thyself upright; with the pure thou wilt shew thyself pure; and with the froward thou wilt shew thyself froward." Thus does the human soul reflect its own presentment of God. Thus are God's mien and behavior toward a man inevitably affected by the man's demeanor toward God.

Through all its history our race has been gradually developing the religious conceptions which are current to-day. How many forms of Deity the race has worshipped! The patriarch was a type of God; so were the ruler, the king, the fighter, the lord of hosts, the shepherd, and the judge implacable. Man's conception of God has mounted century after century,

has become exalted, purified, and ennobled. In a very true sense, "Each age must worship its own thought of God," as Lowell said. In a very true sense each human being imagines his own God. This gradual purification and exaltation is the legitimate result of clearer and clearer thinking. And that clearer, juster thinking is what our own generation greatly needs. That is what our generation must have, in order to free itself from the curse of materialism. That is what will fill again the empty churches, — clearness of view on the sacred things of life, clearness of view concerning heaven and hell in this present, actual world.

Then we all need a perfectly clear conception of what a religious man is. Earlier generations have entertained strange conceptions of what it is to be religious. A ceremony, an observance, worship of a sacred book, a beloved ritual, or a sacrament, or all these things together, will never make any person truly religious. These may be aids to the maintenance of institutions of religion. They are not religion, and never can be. And, indeed, when we come to the bottom of the matter, there is only one decisive test of the religious state of a human being. We declared just now in our responsive reading that we meant to work together, believing that religion is love to God and love to man. Now the true test of the religious quality of a human being is really this, — does he love man? If he loves man truly, he cannot help loving God; and there is no way of telling whether he loves God, except by seeing whether or not he loves man. Let us remember this in our own daily lives, and in our judgments of our fellows.

Abou Ben Adhem put this matter just right, when

the angel told him that his name was not written in the book of those who loved the Lord.

"Abou spoke more low,
But cheerly still, and said, 'I pray thee, then,
Write me as one who loves his fellow-men.'
The angel wrote, and vanished; the next night
He came again, with a great awakening light,
And showed their names whom love of God had blest.
And, lo! Ben Adhem's name led all the rest."

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Fourth Series.] [No. 141.

FAITH, HOPE, AND LOVE THE CHILDREN OF SORROW

BY

REV. CHARLES A. ALLEN.

AMERICAN UNITARIAN ASSOCIATION
BOSTON

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The Fatherhood of God.
The Brotherhood of Man.
The Leadership of Jesus.
Salvation by Character.
The Progress of Mankind,
onward and upward forever.

Typical Covenant of a Unitarian Church.

In the love of the truth, and the spirit of Jesus Christ, we unite for the worship of God and the service of man.

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(*As expressed in the By-Laws of the American Unitarian Association*).

"The object of the American Unitarian Association shall be to diffuse the knowledge and promote the interests of pure Christianity; and all Unitarian Christians shall be invited to unite and co-operate with it for that purpose."

(*As expressed by the National Conference of Unitarian and Other Christian Churches, at Saratoga, N. Y., in 1894.*)

"These Churches accept the religion of Jesus, holding, in accordance with his teaching, that practical religion is summed up in love to God and love to man.

"The Conference recognizes the fact that its constituency is Congregational in tradition and polity. Therefore, it declares that nothing in this Constitution is to be construed as an authoritative test; and we cordially invite to our working fellowship any who, while differing from us in belief, are in general sympathy with our spirit and our practical aims."

FAITH, HOPE, AND LOVE, THE CHILDREN OF SORROW.

Ought not the Christ to have suffered these things, and to enter into his glory? — LUKE xxiv. 26.

And now abideth faith, hope, and love, only these three; and the greatest of these is love. — 1 COR. xiii. 13.

The disciples had come up to Jerusalem, expecting that their Master would soon be proclaimed as the king of a new kingdom. But, instead of this, a sudden arrest and a hurried trial were followed by his ignominious death. It was a crushing blow, shattering all their eager hopes and making them even waver in their loyalty to him. For, when he was lifted on the cross, how hard for them to believe that he was really the Chosen of God!

Thus they came under the shadow of the mysterious problem of suffering, — a problem that still troubles many Christian hearts; for they asked then, as many ask to-day: "Why should good men who deserve happiness be called to suffer? Why should even the Christ be called to suffer?"

Perplexing and distressing have these questions often seemed; but Christian faith has always taught that in suffering and sorrow there are blessed purposes, that these experiences which at first seem full of wrath and terror are really angels in disguise.

> "Sorrow and suffering, poverty and death,
> One after other lift their frowning masks,
> And we behold the seraph's face beneath,
> All radiant with the glory and the calm
> Of having looked upon the front of God."

And then these angels, when we recognize them as such, bring us privileges and blessings, which are among the highest joys of human life,— which we should entirely miss if it were not for our experiences of suffering and sorrow. Let us consider three of these, which in their highest meaning are distinctively Christian privileges.

FAITH.

I. In the first place, there is the privilege of religious faith, the belief of the heart in an unseen, everywhere present Power who cares for us with fatherly love. Rarely do we gain any degree of true faith in God while life is full of sunshine, and we live for the happiness of the passing day. As Martineau says, "Whatever is *higher* than happiness is revealed to us only in the *loss* of happiness," — as the stars are seen above us only when the daylight fades around us, — "and that which is highest of all, the life of religion, the sense of sanctity, the allegiance to God, find no place within us till we are cast down in deep affliction." For the great convictions of faith become clear to us, not by the arguments of reason or the influences of nature, neither of which suggest any faith in God's personal love, and therefore no true faith in God (since only they who "dwell" in the divinest love really "know God" and truly believe in Him), but by the moral experiences of the heart in times of suffering and sorrow, or in times of guilt and penitence, when, in the loss of happiness and peace, we keenly feel our dependence on God and gladly listen to words of help and mercy. Suffering, then, is "a divinely ordained means for calling out the higher energies of the soul," the energies of faith, which, even against discouraging appearances, can still trust in the Unseen Love and the Everlasting Life. For this reason no deep religiousness can be looked for in a child.

> " Heaven is not mounted to on wings of dreams;
> Nor doth the unthankful happiness of youth
> Aim thitherward, but floats from flower to flower,
> With earth's warm patch of sunshine well content."

For this reason also certain periods of history have been singularly godless. " It is the great danger of an age of wide-spread wealth and luxury," says Principal Ottley of Oxford, " that it loses the sight of spiritual realities." And such an age, then, needs the discipline of suffering, which has often brought about a great revival of faith.

But these experiences of suffering and sorrow need *a wise interpreter* to make their deepest meaning understood. Such an interpreter is Christianity with its message of a love which is compassionate to the sinner as well as to the saint, and is aiming at a final good in even the bitterest pains. Compare it with Buddhism and Judaism. The former has no faith in God at all, and therefore recognizes no wise purpose anywhere: in suffering and sorrow it sees only evil. The Hebrew faith, on the other hand, believed more intensely in God than any other pre-Christian religion, but limited His fatherly pity to " them that fear," that is, obey, " Him." It was sure that suffering is always a retribution for sin, and that " the man that walketh not in the counsel of the ungodly " will always prosper,— a faith which the first psalm teaches; and it failed to see the truth which Jesus taught by his reverent love for the publicans and sinners, and his heroic trust in those tragic last hours. Christianity alone, in the great message for which the Cross stands, helps us to find by life's sufferings and sorrows a true faith in God, assuring us that we are the children of an All-embracing Love and the heirs of an Immortal World, so that thus we enter into the true glory of this present life.

HOPE.

II. Then, again, there is the privilege of religious hope, that is, of an unselfish longing to be perfect. For the hope that is in any manner selfish — such as the hope to be rich or distinguished, the hope to excel in some mental power or artistic skill which the world will praise, or the hope of salvation in the sense of being admitted to a heaven that is far aloof from the world of sinners — is not Christian. But we find a suggestion of the true meaning in the words of Dr. Edwin Abbott of London, "When you have put away each selfish expectation, you may be sure that your every hope will be crowned with fulfilment; nothing will seem too high to become the object of aspiration." And Principal Ottley says, "The highest object of hope for man is the perfection of his own nature," — a perfection which, we must remember, can be attained in no other way than by broadening and deepening our life as Jesus did, with the loving service of our fellow-men. It is what Dr. Farrar means in saying, "Hope is faith in Christ directed to the future"; or, in other words, it is our longing to be Christ-like. It is what the apostle means in the text, "Reaching forth unto those things which are before, I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus"; since this high calling, this Christian ideal, signifies a life of self-forgetful, reverent love for all mankind. In this sense it is true that "we are saved by hope." And such hope is a distinctive sentiment of Christianity; for no other religion has held out an ideal of limitless progress and has said to men, "Be ye perfect even as your Father in heaven is perfect," — a precept of which the meaning is explained by parallel words in another Gospel, "Be ye merciful as your Father also is merciful." *For the perfection that Jesus required is a perfect love.*

But seldom is perfection of any kind attained, or even sought, without the goads of disappointment and trouble.

When Jenny Lind, the most admired of the famous vocalists of her time, at the age of twenty-one went to Paris to train her voice under a great teacher, her first trial was an utter failure. "You have no voice left," was the master's judgment. Never before and never after did she know such mental suffering. But she would not be discouraged. She studied hard for many weeks, urged on by the keenness of her disappointment, and at another trial she was accepted as a pupil and began her brilliant career. To this bitter discipline at the beginning she attributed her final success. And this which is true of artistic genius is just as true of personal and national character. If our life is easy and happy, we are apt to be selfish and content; but in suffering and disappointment and danger we learn our imperfections, new ideals dawn before us, great aspirations stir within us. Many a selfish life has been ennobled by grief and become a fountain of benefactions to others. Seldom has there lived any hero or saint who would not confess that he owed whatever greatness he had attained to experiences of struggle and sorrow. Even of Jesus it was said that he was "made perfect through sufferings." Both individuals and nations have thus been called to bear suffering and sorrow, so that they might awake to higher aims, until at last they have won the fulfilment of their noblest aspirations in being permitted to do something for the benefit of their fellow-men, and thus have entered into their true glory.

LOVE.

III. Then, finally, there is the privilege of love, which is greater than faith or hope, ("the greatest of these," says the Apostle,) because it is the perfection which faith adores in God and hope aspires to attain in our human life. But there are higher and lower kinds of love; and there are also feelings called by this name which are unworthy of the name. We sometimes, for instance, give the name to what is only

greed. Even the love of man for woman may be only a longing to have and to hold, as one's exclusive possession in the wedded tie, a lovely face and a graceful form,— as selfish a feeling as the wish to own a beautiful painting or a stately mansion. Then there are other forms of love, in some degree unselfish, to be sure, but often thoughtless of the rights of others and easily tempted to do heartless things. Parents, for instance, who seem to love their children, will yet at times consult their own pleasure rather than these children's welfare, or will disown and disinherit them for some disobedience or folly, which hurts the parents' pride, but does not make them long to forgive and save these children. It is a love that soon withers away under the hot sun of worldliness, like the seed that was sown in shallow ground. Then there is the feeble love that cannot bear the strain of long separation; we observe it in people, who, while they live near together, really think that they love one another, but, when they go apart to a distance, soon become indifferent. Then nobler than all these feelings is the love of which the poet speaks in the lines,

> "Wisdom is meek sorrow's patient child,
> And empire over self, and all the deep
> Strong charities that make men seem like gods,"

a love which is like true faith and true hope, in that they are all the children of sorrow. In our sunny hours, indeed, we love our kindred, our neighbors, our friends, with an unselfish love; we share with them their joy, we go to their homes with glad congratulations; but, when we are called to sympathize with their griefs, when bereavement and pain and trouble open in our hearts the fountains of pity, does not our love flow out from unexpected depths with a wonderful glow like the outpouring of a new life? And, henceforth, though the pain or grief may pass away and the days may come and go with sunny joy, does not our love have a

depth and warmth which can never be quite lost and would be impossible but for these experiences of suffering and sorrow? Indeed, without these sympathies that are born of pain and grief, these "deep, strong charities" hallowed by pity, how little would human life be worth! Some natural affection, to be sure, would draw us together, just as it brings the beasts together; but we should know nothing of that tender helpfulness which gives to life its sweetest fragrance and makes us to one another forever afterward inexpressibly dear.

Nevertheless, this natural impulsive love, even when disciplined by suffering and sorrow, is not yet the Christian love which the Apostle praised,— the charity that "suffereth long," that "is not easily provoked," that "rejoiceth not in iniquity," that "beareth and believeth all things," and is "the bond of perfectness," "the end of the commandment," and "the fulfilling of the law." This Christian love, says Phillips Brooks, is "the love of humanity, grounded on the conviction which Christ implanted, that every man is the child of God." It implies a thoughtfulness of "the sanctity of all human life" and "the infinite value of the individual," a "reverential estimate of the human soul, without which," says Martineau, "no faith, no hope, no holy form of truth, is possible." When this spirit of reverence is added to sympathy, it transforms every lower form of love into the distinctively Christian love, the noblest kind of love, because it loves, not any superficial traits, but that which is deepest in human nature, "the hidden and possible saint in the sinner," says Principal Fairbairn of Oxford, the latent goodness in every man, which, though it be but a tiny spark, is God's real presence, ever worthy of our reverence. And such love, because it reverently recognizes the infinite moral possibilities of every soul and the infinite value of the soul in God's sight, feels secure of immortality. Indeed, this is

the one conclusive argument for immortality,— the argument on which Jesus rested his faith when he said that all live unto God.

From this reverence have sprung all distinctively Christian institutions. For instance, it is the mutual reverence of husband and wife as immortal souls, that hallows the wedded tie in Christendom, as it is hallowed nowhere else,— a reverence that teaches patience, tenderness, forgivingness, and created the Christian home. It is the mutual reverence of fellow-citizens, of the rich and the poor, of the wise and the weak, as all alike children of God, that, as Stopford Brooke has said, "is the foundation of all noble and enduring democracy," and created the ideal of the Christian state — an ideal, which has never yet been fully realized, but is gradually transforming our modern world. It is reverence for the wayward and sinful, because in them there are possibilities of the highest goodness, the faith, says Martineau, "that the meanest is but the highest in the germ," a faith, says Pfleiderer, "first brought about by Christianity," that created our Christian philanthropy, the noblest of all philanthropies; for even Buddhist philanthropy lacks just this reverence, does not see the infinite possibilities of human nature and the divine ministry of suffering and sorrow for the spiritual training of mankind, and therefore is more concerned to remove the sufferings of human life than to promote the spiritual growth of human souls. It is humane; and yet it lacks true love, just because it lacks true faith. Christian love, on the other hand, is more concerned about the spiritual needs of men; as far as is possible and wise, it mitigates and consoles; but it accepts the inevitable sufferings of life with courage and faith, for it has learned the great lessons of the Cross.

We might naturally infer that no one, not even the Christ, could fully apprehend the meaning of this noblest love but

by experiences of suffering and sorrow, and, when we carefully read the gospel story, we find some reason to think that this was true in even the life of Jesus. For in the Sermon on the Mount we find no teaching of such a love as is taught in the fifteenth chapter of Luke. There is not the least expression of interest in the publicans and sinners. But the love that from the first had cared for those who were sick and suffering in body soon began to reach out to those who were in spiritual need; and, after Matthew, the publican, "forsook all and followed him," there were many publicans and sinners in his company. A little later he was called "the friend of publicans and sinners"; for his kindness drew these outcasts to him, wakening a hunger for better things and finding unsuspected treasures of goodness in men and women whom respectable people abhorred. When at length he was forced to flee from Galilee, and, after wandering awhile in Gentile districts, began the last sad journey to Jerusalem, his love became more tenderly sympathetic for those who, like him, were despised and rejected,— they, because they were so evil; he, because he was so good. At last he framed the three exquisite parables of the Lost Sheep, the Lost Coin and the Lost Son, to justify the ever-deepening humanity of his ministry by proclaiming a novel truth about God's relations to mankind and our own duties to one another. For in the discipline of trouble and disappointment his heart was taught what no saint or sage had ever learned, that man is always God's child, still dear to the Infinite Heart, and still having divine possibilities of goodness within him, though apparently lost like the sheep and the coin and the wayward boy; and that, therefore, these degraded men and women have a holy, imperative claim upon us for reverent pity, trust, and love.

"It is the deepest idea of Jesus," says Stopford Brooke,

"that, because all are children of God, to give up one's self for others is the true life." But he could not have fully apprehended this idea until he clearly saw that he himself was called by the providence of God to "suffer many things and be rejected," and "to give his life a ransom for many." Thus he was "made perfect" in his love "through sufferings"; and he entered into the depths of sorrow, that he might teach more persuasively the all-embracing and redeeming love of God and draw all men together in the ties of a holy brotherhood. *Out of suffering came the gospel which alone has power to save.*

In his early ministry he had spoken of God's *benevolent* love, as sending the bounties of nature impartially to the good and the evil, and with a like impartial benevolence forgiving our trespasses; but he said nothing of a *redeeming* love which would "save that which is lost," till, disappointed and defeated, he is going to Jerusalem to die. The Sermon on the Mount teaches only that God is ready to forgive us when we ourselves are in a forgiving spirit toward our fellow-men. Reconciliation must begin with our own seeking after God,— a doctrine which is distinctively Jewish. But in his later ministry Jesus taught that God is trying to awaken in us this forgiving spirit by the revelations of His love for which the Cross has stood to us, and so to redeem us from our unforgiving spirit and all our sinfulness; that God has always been seeking us, even when we seemed to be far away from Him, as the shepherd sought his wandering sheep,— which is the distinctively Christian doctrine of "grace."

He began his ministry as a Jewish rabbi; he ended it as one who would be the Saviour of all mankind. In the Sermon on the Mount he reaffirmed the noblest doctrines of the Hebrew prophets; yet his aim was chiefly ethical,— an appeal for sincerity and reality of character, and a call for a

great reform in Israel. But he soon saw that his nation needed, not law, so much as love,— not new precepts, so much as a new enthusiasm,— not ethics, so much as a reverent, self-sacrificing interest in every fellow-man as an immortal child of God; and that such a love would renovate the world as no mere ethics without the Christian enthusiasm could do. His distinctive gospel was the announcement of *the divine power of such a perfect love* by which a human life reveals the heart of God,— as it was also the gospel that was afterward preached by Paul, who understood the spirit of the Master and the true meaning of his religion far better than the other leaders of the Early Church.

It was the good news for which the world was waiting, but which even to-day the world does not half understand and the Church has often misrepresented,— the good news which was implied in the Apostle's praise of "charity" and his insistence that love is the fulfilling of the law, as truly as it was taught in the parable of the Prodigal Son and in all the Master's ministry of service. And because he was so loyal to this gospel of a perfect love, even when it caused his tragic death, he has been exalted to a throne far above all other thrones and entered into his glory.

Such faith, hope, and love sum up the essence of his religion; for, while rites and dogmas suffer change, beliefs which once were thought essential lose their power, "prophecies fail," and "knowledge," like that which theology claims, "shall vanish away," these three abide. Whosoever, then, lives in such faith, hope, and love, is a true disciple. No other creed can be required. All Christians are united in the Universal Church by this threefold cord. And by such faith, hope, and love shall at last this world be redeemed from its sin and suffering and enter into its glory.

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FOURTH SERIES.] [No. 142.

IS GOING TO CHURCH A DUTY?

BY

REV. MINOT J. SAVAGE, D.D.

AMERICAN UNITARIAN ASSOCIATION
BOSTON

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IS GOING TO CHURCH A DUTY?

This is the question which I am going to try to answer; and my text you will find in the fourteenth chapter of Romans, at the seventh verse: "For none of us liveth to himself, and none dieth to himself."

A duty is something which is due, something which we owe and ought, so far as possible, to pay. The nature and extent of our obligations to our fellowmen, it seems to me, are rarely considered sufficiently to be adequately understood. How much and what do I owe to humanity? Literally everything,—everything I have, everything I am; and this is so literally and so simply true that no man has a right to say, "I will do as I please with my possessions, my time, or my powers."

Consider for a minute. Suppose I have a strong and fair body. Where did I get it? Is it mine in the sense that I have a right to be proud of it, and that I may do as I please with my physical strength? The long struggle and effort of the race in every stage of its evolution, from brute towards angel, has evolved whatever is fine and fair in the human form; and it is an outright gift to me, whatever of it I may have or say I own.

How about the brain? Perhaps I am more than usually intelligent, or have some remarkable brain power. Is that mine? (When I say "I," I am merely

speaking for all the rest of you, as you will understand.) Is this mine? The human race from the beginning, again, has been developing, creating the human brain. When men have thought, and tried to think straight and clear, they have been creating brain cells as much as the athlete in his exercises creates lung cells. Whatever mental ability I have, then, is an outright gift to me.

How about my conscience, my sense of right? Again, that is the result of the age-long evolution of the human race. How about my religious liberty and opportunities, my high and fine aspirations to reverence and worship? Again, the human race from the beginning has been religious according to its light, as best it has been able; and it has developed all that is high and fine in the religious life of the world, and has conveyed it as an outright gift to me.

Our religious liberty! Every man that has dared to speak in the face of the opposition of his time, every man who has gone to prison or the stake, all who have been consecrated to the high and noble, have been those who have transmitted to me the priceless heritage which I enjoy to-day.

Suppose I am a remarkable business man, have unusual power, shrewdness; put me anywhere you please, I am able to see the situation and control it. Am I to pride myself on that, and say, if I accumulate a large amount of money as the result of it, I may do as I please with it? No! Where did you get your business ability? Again, this is a heritage, an outright gift of the race; and the opportunity, the business chance of which you have taken advantage, every discovery, every invention, everything that has made the race able to conquer and civilize

the earth ; all that has put its forces within our control, every telegraph wire, every ship that sails the sea,—all these things that have created the present condition of interdependence and interchange among nations have given me my opportunity. These, again, are outright gifts, the result of the age-long struggle and effort of man.

So there is simply and literally nothing that I am or have that I do not owe. No man has any right, then, to stand apart, in isolation and attempted independence, and say, "I will live as I please, and let the old world wag as it will." You are responsible for the way the old world wags, and under the highest conceivable obligation to do what you can to make things what they ought to be.

One step more, and we shall be ready to find ourselves face to face with a consideration of our relation to the Church. There are a good many ways in which I can serve people ; but, if I serve them in the highest things, I serve them most effectively and in the best possible way.

Take, for example, the training of a child. I may train a child to be dependent upon somebody else at every step ; but I may be able to appoint guardians and to lay up provision for him in such a way that there shall not be an hour of his life long when every wish may not be attended to. But, if I train my child in such a way that he becomes master of himself, his own faculties and powers, and is able to make provision for himself, do I not do better by him ? In that way I not only satisfy indirectly his wants and needs, but I make a man of him, which is infinitely more important.

So you may help a man who is hungry. You give

him something to eat; but, if that is all, you must give him something to-morrow, next week, next year, and perhaps until the end of his life. You make him dependent. But, if you can train him, appeal to his self-respect, create in him a high ideal as to what it means to be a man, call out all the latent forces and faculties of his nature, you render him an unspeakably higher service. So if I can serve men in the best way, I render them the most effective and lasting benefit.

We are now ready to face the question of our relation to the Church, and the question as to whether or not there is any duty about it. The title I announced was, "Is going to Church a Duty?" Of course, "going to church" is simply a general term to cover our whole relation to the Church. Ought we to belong to the Church, consecrate ourselves to its service?

Let us see. What is the highest obligation resting upon a man? So far as he personally is concerned, it is that he shall be a man, with all that that implies. What is it to be a man? To be a fine animal? The finer animal you can be, the better; but that is not being a man. Cultivate and develop your intellectual power to any extent you please, but that is not all, nor is it the highest.

Herbert Spencer has dwelt, in his last volume, with a great deal of insistent emphasis on the idea that we do not necessarily make people better because we make them know more. He says that the advancement of moralization does not necessarily keep step with the work of intellectualization. If you teach a man to be wise and shrewd, and he has no conscience or character, you only make the more efficient scoundrel of him; that is all.

So intellectual development is not enough; and in-

tellectual development may be purely and simply selfish. The man who shuts himself up in his library, keeps himself away from his fellow-men, cares only to enjoy his books, may be as selfish as the man who lives only for the saloon, may cut himself off as completely from any vital and helpful relations with his fellow-men. Intellectual development, then, is not enough.

If you cultivate your æsthetic side until you appreciate and admire everything that is beautiful in nature and art, you may not even then transcend that which is purely selfish, you may not come up into that which is highest and most characteristic of your manhood. A man is what? He is a child of God. He is a soul. He is a spiritual being.

I do not mean now to dogmatize on theological matters. Do not understand the terms I am using from that point of view. The highest and finest thing in a man is love, sympathy, tenderness, pity, helpfulness. No matter what your theological ideas may be, no matter whether you believe in God or the future life or not, so much is true. The highest and most characteristic thing in a man is this which we call spiritual. And, when we say that a man ought to be a man, it means that he ought to climb up and live in these ranges of his being.

Any creature ought to be what it can be. We buy a singing bird, and it does not sing. We feel that we are being cheated. A horse that is destined for the race-course, we say, ought to be able to run. A dray horse may be simply strong and well trained. A pointer dog must point. A setter dog must set. We claim that a creature ought to be what it is called and capable of being. A man ought to come up and live

in the spiritual ranges of his being. If he does not, he is not a man, is not true to the highest and noblest conception of his being.

Can a man do this alone? Can he do it out of relation to his fellow-men? Can he go into his library or into the woods, and do it? Can he do it simply on his own account? To ask the question is to answer it. A magnet might as well be a magnet, and not attract anything. A river might as well be called a river, when it is unable with the onward rush of its waters to turn the wheels of a mill that is adapted to their power. The sun is a sun only as it shines. A man, then, is a man, in the highest and truest sense of the word, only as he cultivates the highest and finest qualities that make him a spiritual being; and these are the ones which of necessity relate him vitally and helpfully to his fellow-men.

You cannot love and sympathize and be tender and helpful all by yourself, and with nobody to love, with whom to sympathize, towards whom you are to be helpful. The very fact of cultivating these things, which constitute you in the highest and truest sense of the word a man, of necessity put you in vital and helpful relation to your fellow-men.

What then? The Church is the only organization on the face of the earth that has this cultivation of manhood, this development of the highest and most essential characteristics of men and women, as its one essential aim. The Church exists for this. It is a place where these faculties and powers are appealed to, where they are called out and developed, where they are directed and brought into play. This is what the Church is for; and there is no other organization in all the wide world the one aim and end and

object of which is to make manhood and womanhood.

I do not mean to say that a man cannot cultivate these qualities and not go into a church during the whole length of his life; I do not say that he cannot be such a man and not become united with any ecclesiastical organization; but I do say this: he must cultivate those qualities and faculties in him, and he must live the kind of life that the Church exists to cultivate and help him attain. So he must, if he do not link himself with any outside and visible Church, *be* what the Church is for. He cannot escape it.

So that the essential truth of our contention remains; and, if a man with difficulty lives this kind of life without associating himself with those of us who are trying to live it, he admits the supremacy of those things for which the Church stands and which constitute it what it is.

Another point. We do not believe any longer in those conceptions of God and the future life which used to make it the one great end and aim of the Church to save the soul from the wrath of God in another life. There was no trouble in getting people to go to church in the old days, when everybody believed that the Church was the one means by which their souls could be saved from eternal wrath.

If a man is drowning and a boat puts out to his rescue, it does not require a great deal of eloquence to persuade him to get aboard. But this idea of the Church has passed away. People no longer believe in that kind of punishment in another life, or that the Church under any of its forms has exclusive power to save men from that kind of wrath of God.

But does it follow, therefore, that we do not need

any preparation for that other life? I believe we need preparation quite as definite and distinct and earnestly pursued as men supposed themselves to need in the days gone by. I believe neither in rewards nor punishments in this world or in any other, using those words in their arbitrary sense; but I believe with my whole soul in results in this world and in all others, believe there is no other one thing so essentially urged and uttered by our modern scientific conception of the universe as this,—the inevitable connection between cause and effect, in this world and in every world.

What then? Go on and pass through the shadow, and issue, as I believe, into that other life which is the next step beyond this. Does it make no difference whether I am ready for it or not? As an illustration, suppose you were liable to be caught up by some force that was beyond your control, carried on board a ship, and compelled to sail for some other country. Suppose you were liable to this at any minute. Would it be of no concern to you to know what you could about that country, to understand something of its manners and customs, to learn, if you could, the speech of its people, so that, when you got there, you would not be entirely out of your element?

I believe in that other country. I believe—yea, I know—that, if that other country exists, the qualities, the faculties, powers, that will come into play there, are these of which I have been speaking,—love, tenderness, sympathy, pity, helpfulness. It will be the spiritual man that will live there; and so I believe that it is of the utmost importance for us to cultivate and develop our spiritual natures here day by day, so that, when we take that next step, we shall

come into a familiar land, and one for which we have prepared ourselves and where we shall feel at home.

Take another illustration. A Harvard graduate,— or Yale or Columbia; no matter of what university,— does it make no difference whether he attends to his business, makes himself familiar with his text-books, develops himself in every way he can during his college career? Suppose, if he does not do so, he knows that, when he gets out of college, he is not going to be beaten or clubbed or put into prison, that no one is going to inflict corporal punishment upon him, or torture him,— suppose he knew that, would it make no difference whether he did or did not? Would it be of no importance on the day of graduation as to whether or not he had trained himself so as to be ready for life?

So I believe that this is a training school,— this world. We are here getting ready for life; and it makes all the difference in the world, when the time comes, when the door is opened and we step out into that other room in the great Father's house, as to whether we are ready for it or not. And the way to get ready,— not the old way, not placating God's wrath,— the way to get ready is not something magical, something disconnected from the kind of life we are leading here: it is just living this life as we ought, in the noblest and highest and finest things that are in us.

In that way we are helping on the development through which this human race is passing, from brute to angel, and getting ready for angelic fellowship and an angelic career,— the simplest thing in the world, and at the same time one of the most important.

And, again, the Church is the only institution on the

face of the earth that is specially and entirely devoted to this one thing. The churches are not perfect, they are made out of the kind of people who live in the places where they are organized: they have to be. But the ideal, the aim, the purpose, the end, of the Church, is the finest and highest of which we can conceive. For there is nothing better, can be nothing better, than to help people think and feel and love and worship and live; and that is what the Church is for.

One other thing let me hint just in passing. A side issue, if you choose, and yet one so intensely important that I feel it to be a part of my theme. First or last, all of us have to meet great sorrows. Young people, some of them, have not yet tasted these sorrows; and the words I speak have no special meaning to them. But those of you who are older know that it is universal, that there is no escape. We lose father, mother, brother, sister, friend, husband, wife, or child. We lose those dearer to us than life.

This is an experience from which no one escapes. It is a strange voyage we have started out on. No matter what the nature of the ship,—a great merchant ship,—a man-of-war, a pleasure-boat, a little pinnace, a canoe, no matter what,—every craft afloat on this sea of life is doomed to go down before it reaches any visible harbor. Is not that a strange arrangement?

What does it mean? Does it mean pessimism, the loss of all heart and faith, that there is no meaning or purpose in life, that either God is a devil or does not exist or does not care? Does it mean these things? I do not believe it. I believe that every ship that sinks sinks to another sea, and sails on to some port as

yet invisible to us, but finer than anything of which we can dream. I believe the apostle's words, that "it has not yet entered into the heart of man to conceive the things that God hath prepared for them that love him."

When these experiences come,— and, as I have said, they come to all of us,— what shall we do? Shall we lose heart, "curse God and die," mourn our hearts out, wrap ourselves up selfishly in our personal griefs, and leave the world to its sorrows? What shall we do? I believe that the hopes and thoughts and aspirations and inspirations which the Church stands for have the only sane and divine answer.

The Church stands as a witness to the Fatherhood of God, his eternal love and care; and, if I may believe that,— and I do believe it,— then let my ship sink. Let the ships of my friends go down. That is not the end. The end is just over there, beyond the shadow, in a light that shines from a sun that shall nevermore go down. The human heart, then, in its great exigencies of sorrow and despair, needs, if it may rationally have it, this hope and help for which the Church stands and of which it is an eternal witness.

But now I come to a more practical — as perhaps some of you may think — side of my theme. No matter whether anything I have thus far said in regard to the special phases of this subject be true or not, let us consider another side of our great theme.

As we look over this world, we find all sorts of things out of joint,— in the business world, the social world, the political world; injustice, selfishness, cruelty, wrong, suffering, such as does not need to exist, because it is the suffering which men inflict on each

other. And let me suggest to you right here, in passing, that, if we could eliminate from the problem of human suffering all that for which we ourselves are responsible, what would be left would be so slight and so apparently necessary and of the nature of things that it would constitute no problem which would trouble us as to our faith in the good government of the world.

The great evils of the world are caused by human selfishness, ignorance, greed, cruelty, the determination of particular people to have their own way without any regard to the consequences to any one else. Now how are we going to help this condition of things? Some claim that it is to be remedied by the newspapers. The newspapers are doing a great deal to civilize and Christianize the world, but I leave you to adjust their claim according to your own personal conviction. A large part of the newspapers so preponderantly deal with the evil side of human life as to discourage and dismay instead of give help and strength and cheer.

The public schools, we used to think, were going to redeem the world, and make everything what it ought to be; but we have learned that vice and crime remain even in those places where public education has been carried. And, to recall to your mind again what I said a few moments ago, the best authorities of the world are beginning to recognize that intellectual cultivation and development, and the cultivation and development of moral character, are not necessarily the same, that the one may be carried to almost any extent without any commensurate effect being produced upon the other.

During the time of the French Revolution the

people seemed to have the idea that, if they could only sweep the kings and nobles from the face of the earth, and establish the doctrines of equality and of liberty, all would be well. There was a school of philosophers who taught that all the evil in human society was the result of these artificial distinctions and conditions, that it was caste and class which were responsible.

But the French Republic has been established. On all its buildings throughout Paris there are the words "Liberty, Equality, Fraternity." But is France at peace? Is there no more vice and crime, no more evil, in France? We had a dream in the early days of our republic that we were going to create an ideal condition of things here in this country. But every little while we are compelled to wake up and recognize the fact that evil and injustice and selfishness and greed exist, and play their part of havoc and destruction just as of old; for human nature is very much the same.

I do not mean by this that the world has not been growing slowly better. I believe it has, from the beginning, and that there never was a time in the history of the world when, on the whole, men and women were so good as they are to-day. But — now I come to the very point — what is the secret of whatever good we find in human nature, and why is it that the evils persist? Socialists, still dreaming the old dream which haunted the people at the time of the French Revolution, — only they have changed the form of it, — tell us that, if we could only reconstruct society, poverty and vice and crime and all these things would be done away.

But just consider, friends, the fundamental princi-

ples involved. Here are twelve people. Rearrange the relations in which they stand to each other just as much as you please. Have you changed *them?* If not, then the same old passions, the same old ignorance, greed, the same old forces of every kind, will come into play again, and, modified a little by the changed conditions of affairs, produce substantially the same results.

You never will get a perfect society until you get some perfect men and women of which to make it; and whatever perfection there may be will be the perfection, not of the organization, but the perfection of the individual men and women, whatever the organization may be.

Take the condition of things to-day in the industrial world. Let me recur once more to the coal strike in Pennsylvania. What was the matter? On the one hand were certain capitalists, owners, managers of railways, organized for what? Chiefly to have their own way. On the other hand there were a hundred and fifty thousand miners, organized for what? Chiefly, again, to have their own way. If the managers on both sides had desired to be fair, to be just, to arrange things so that mutually they should be benefited just as much as the condition of things would allow, if they were true and noble and unselfish men, the matter might have been settled in twenty-four hours.

There is no intellectual problem that the wit of man might not solve. It is merely the prejudice and selfishness and anger and hate; it is that these qualities of the evil side of human nature were so dominant that they would not permit them to get together on the basis of a common human brotherhood that cared first to serve God the Father, and help their fellow-men.

And so in every department of life, in business, in society. If we could only learn the fundamental facts which the Church stands for and tries to teach,—that God is our Father and that all we are brethren, and that the differences of rank, education, possession, culture, and refinement are differences, not of essential manhood and womanhood at all, but differences of favoritism, that have been created and conferred upon us; if we would only come to understand that, and deal with men and women as men and women, for the sake of helping and lifting up their manhood and womanhood,—all these evils would slough off and fall away.

The thing we need to-day in society, in the industrial and political worlds, more than everything else put together, is simply straight out, upright, downright manhood.

To make the world right, we need to make you right and me right, that is all. Every one of these difficulties and disturbances can be settled and arranged if only you will be what you ought to be and I will be what I ought to be. And there is no other way of getting at it.

Political rearrangements will not perfect the result. New laws will not perfect the result. Law is one of the most clumsy bits of machinery on the face of the earth; and the best laws in the world are no better in their effect than the people who make them and either obey or disobey them. You cannot carry out and put into effect any laws that the people do not believe in or want made efficient.

So it comes back to this one question of personal character, nothing else. Here, again, the Church—let me say it once more, and emphasize it with all the

power of which I am capable — is the only institution in the world that exists for the sake of creating character, that has no other object, that lives to make manhood and womanhood. Inasmuch, then, as this is the one great crying need of the world, you who wish to help the world must help the Church. At any rate, whether you join any particular church or not, you must help do the work for which the Church stands. You cannot escape it if you would be true to God, yourself, and your fellow-men.

Now at the end. What church will you join or belong to or help on? I am not pleading for this church or the Unitarian Church as such. I am pleading for the active, consecrated, religious life, — that is what I am pleading for. But you can help it on better by connecting yourself with some visible organization. Now what one?

In the first place I would advise every man to have some convictions. Then I would advise him to connect himself with that church which best represents his earnest and honest conviction.

And do not let any small or slight thing stand in the way. I know people who do not go to the church where they belong because of convenience, because friends go somewhere else, because they have married into some other kind of church, because the church is a good ways off and it is not quite easy, because they do not happen to like the music, because they are not quite satisfied with the preacher, — for one of a thousand things that are of no consequence at all when brought face to face with the real principles involved.

I am amazed at the silly childishness of men and women sometimes. I had a parishioner in Boston.

He claimed to care for me, to be devoted to the principles of the Church; but he left the Church and left me, proved false to God and his duty to his fellow-men, because he got mad over something connected with the management of the choir. I know people who get angry and leave the church because an unfamiliar usher puts a stranger in their seat. I mention these as illustrations. All sorts of silly, childish reasons keep a man from being a man, from being true to God, to his minister, to his fellow-men. No true man will be false to these eternal and far-reaching considerations for some little tiny whim like that.

Suppose the minister is not brilliant or brilliant every Sunday: the Church is not a lecture association. You should not go to church because the minister entertains you: that is not what the Church is for. The Church is an organization of men and women trying to lead a high, noble, religious, spiritual life. It is an organization to work in the city, to lift the life of the city; and you join it for the sake of that work.

It is not a concert; and you do not go because you like the music. That is not what the Church is for. The Church is an organization to do something; and you belong to it for the sake of accomplishing these high and grand things for which it exists.

Find out, then, what church best represents the ideas you believe in, then consecrate yourselves to its service, and do not let matters of convenience, because you happen to be tired on Saturday night or it is cloudy Sunday morning, stand in the way of this great and noble and faithful service to your fellow-men.

I do not know any reason in the world why the

minister has not just as much right to stay at home Sunday morning, when it rains, as anybody else. If it is anybody's duty to make the Church efficient for the sake of helping the world, then it is every man's duty to do it; equally his duty. I repudiate that idea of my relation to God and my fellow-men which makes it one whit different from that in which all of you stand. Consecrate yourselves to this high service to your fellows, and feel that the grandest thing you can do is to co-operate with God in helping to make the world better.

ACCEPTING LIFE'S LIMITATIONS

BY

REV. JOHN DUMONT REID

AMERICAN UNITARIAN ASSOCIATION
BOSTON

Our Faith.

The Fatherhood of God.
The Brotherhood of Man.
The Leadership of Jesus.
Salvation by Character.
The Progress of Mankind,
onward and upward forever.

Typical Covenant of a Unitarian Church.

In the love of the truth, and the spirit of Jesus Christ, we unite for the worship of God and the service of man.

Our Declaration

(*As expressed in the By-Laws of the American Unitarian Association*).

"The object of the American Unitarian Association shall be to diffuse the knowledge and promote the interests of pure Christianity; and all Unitarian Christians shall be invited to unite and co-operate with it for that purpose."

(*As expressed by the National Conference of Unitarian and Other Christian Churches, at Saratoga, N. Y., in 1894.*)

"These Churches accept the religion of Jesus, holding, in accordance with his teaching, that practical religion is summed up in love to God and love to man.

"The Conference recognizes the fact that its constituency is Congregational in tradition and polity. Therefore, it declares that nothing in this Constitution is to be construed as an authoritative test; and we cordially invite to our working fellowship any who, while differing from us in belief, are in general sympathy with our spirit and our practical aims."

ACCEPTING LIFE'S LIMITATIONS.

"Thy will be done." — MATT. vi. 10.

THESE words are short and simple, but to say them with full understanding and meaning is the very hardest thing in all the world. They imply on our part not action, but the restraint of action; and that is the severest test of our strength. It takes the discipline of restraint to show of what stuff we are made. Not otherwise can our highest qualities be put to the utmost proof. Nothing so tries the courage of soldiers in battle as to have to remain quiet under fire without returning it. They will perform any impossible deed of heroism which calls for action rather than that. In one of the battles of the Russo-Turkish War a Russian regiment became excited, and was disobeying orders and rapidly getting out of the control of its officers. General Skobeleff took personal command, and presently had them drawn up at attention as if on inspection drill, while the shots of the enemy fell among and around them. He moved calmly along their front, inspecting them at his leisure. Then he asked them how they enjoyed it. They were not enjoying it, and they said so. He informed them that, unless they would promise to obey orders, he would keep them in that position all day. They promised, and there was no more trouble. In life it is the same. The call to action, however formidable the task involved, is never so hard to obey as the call to resignation, to patience, to endurance.

And yet this is a call that we are bound to heed. It holds before us a duty that we may not shirk. It is not only nor chiefly what we do that serves the great ends of life, but what we are. The salvation of ourselves and of the world depends somewhat on our action, but it depends much more on our attitude and our influence. Now what we are, our attitude and influence, is pretty much determined by the way we accept our appointed lot in life. To each of us there is allotted a certain sphere of life. Within that sphere we have freedom of choice. We can fill it as we will. If we choose wisely, we shall find our full usefulness and happiness within the bounds thus set for us, and they will never dwarf or confine our noblest aspirations and possibilities. We shall always be able to live as greatly as we are capable of. But with the fixing of our sphere of life we have nothing to do. That is determined by our own constitution and the constitution of things around us. It is the will of God concerning us. Whatever in us is not self-will is God's will. Whatever in the world around us is not the self-will of others is God's will. We call it the inevitable. To chafe against it or resist it is useless. We thus lose the life we might live; and we find no compensation for that loss, for no other life is possible to us. To yield to the inevitable, to accept it, to make God's will our will, is the true wisdom and the true piety. If we consent to live not by caprice, but by the reason and conscience which makes known to us the divine will, our lives thereby become expressions of a purpose higher than our own, in the working out of which we shall come to our completeness. The life that is not directed by self-will is directed by the will of God;

and to say "Thy will be done" is only to fall in with the true plan of our life wherein its highest and largest possibilities are unfolded.

As far as the place we are to fill in life is concerned, we may learn what the will of God is by taking account of our personal limitations. And here the graces of teachableness and humility will stand us in good stead. It is not intended that a mouse should be a lion, or a lion a swan, or a swan a nightingale, or that a square peg should fit in a round hole. And for each of us mortals it is the will of Him who made us that we shall be what He has fitted us to be. We are to observe our own limitations, to acquiesce in them. We ought to be willing to serve our generation according to the will of God as it is made known in these, and not according to our mere self-will in spite of these. As we come to know our limitations truly, we shall not find them prison bars, but walls of defence and support within which we may grow to our utmost capacity. In them we shall see how God besets us behind and before, and lays His hand upon us to hold us to our own true life and work. What God would have us do appears in what we can do. This is a truth that people who are impatient to reform the world overlook. Impatience and reform do not go well together. The will of the reformer does not always turn out to be the will of God. One trouble with many a would-be reformer is that he overestimates the immediate importance of the thing he wishes to get done. He loses sight of its relation to other things. He is impatient for results. But the will of God knows no impatience. Horace Mann said, "The difference

between God and me is that I am often in a hurry, and God never is." The true method of reform is the method of nature,— evolution, not revolution. That is to say, usually ; and the exceptions will take care of themselves : they cannot be forced. God works through us, but He does not require us to jump in and do His work for him. And when we are foolish or self-willed and try it, the results are not encouraging.

Now this does not imply a doctrine of "masterful inactivity." To obey the will of God does not mean just to follow the line of least resistance. All real life and progress comes by overcoming difficulties. But we are to overcome those difficulties we are fitted to overcome, and we are to overcome them in the way that is natural to us. We are to fight with the weapons and work with the tools we have. Each has his own equipment, and that determines the thing he can do, and also the thing he cannot do and ought to let alone. You cannot make a garden with spoons and forks, and you cannot eat your dinner with spade and hoe. Bows and arrows will not avail against a modern battleship ; but neither is it safe for even William Tell to shoot the apple from his son's head with a Krupp gun. To be misemployed is as bad as to be unemployed. To yield to the restraints of God's will gives ample scope to what powers we really have, and to all fruitful activity that we are capable of. It keeps us back only from vain endeavors and misleading quests,— vain and misleading because in them our real talents are not employed, and so go to waste. By our renunciation of such allurements we come to know our true opportunities and to choose the line of our most efficient action.

Acquiescence in the will of God calls us to endurance. Not only our more intimate personal limitations, but all the limitations of our lot impose this necessity. We are to accept the limitations of circumstances near and remote and of other people besides ourselves.

There are things that we cannot change. Many of these are not as we would have them. To us they seem ills. Some of them doubtless are ills. They interfere with our plans, narrow our activities, hamper us in many ways. Often we see in such things, whether rightly or wrongly, hindrances to good. Because of them the better ideals of life cannot be realized. Nevertheless, as long as they continue and lie beyond our power to change, it is a part of life's lesson to endure them with patience. We are to take them as they are and make the best of them. Sometimes they will turn out to be good which we had not been able to discern. Even if evil, there is still a soul of goodness in them which we may pluck out. In any case it is our true wisdom to play the part of cheerful acquiescence in them. That is the only way to get the better of the thousand and one petty annoyances of life, and with its most serious obstacles and hardships it is the same. How often do merely untoward physical events and conditions disturb our peace of mind or even threaten the permanent good of life according to their magnitude! The weather upsets some plan for to-day or this week. Shall I take it with a good grace or with a bad grace? Ill-health or old age or some infirmity cuts off possibilities of usefulness or enjoyment on which I had set my heart. Shall I repine? One of the world's great musical composers was stricken with deafness. But he

still made music in his soul, and the world is the richer for it. Epictetus was part of his life a slave, and he became a hopeless cripple. Yet after his fashion he walked with God and God with him, and his was the liberty of a child of God. It was a man in prison who wrote, "My mind a kingdom is"; and John Milton in his blindness said, "They also serve who only stand and wait." How many men and women are there who would like to be in the thick of the world's work and to share in its manifold interests, but who by a hard necessity are bound fast in some narrow round of duty and can only look afar on the fascinating spectacle in which they would fain bear a part, like that woman of whom a poet sings who from the doorway of her humble home in the country looks out wistfully every day as the passenger train goes flying past, "Watching the world go by"! Others there are whose dearest wish is to escape from the endless distractions of the world into some quiet nook where they may have peace,— "From the riot to the rest," as another poet puts it. And yet for each class in the place where it is set the divine will has some good purpose to be served and some sufficing reward to be won.

Then our patience is tried by people. We look to them for friendship, for appreciation, for co-operation in the things that interest us; and we do not get the response we had hoped for. We are disappointed in them. They turn out to be other than we had thought. Their aims are different from ours. This may be because of some defect in them: they have not kept pace with our growth. Again, the fault may lie with us. We may be unreasonable in our demands. Or they may have outstripped us. We may be really, though unconsciously, regretting the

increased usefulness and development of our friends, because it leaves us behind. As they acquire wider interests, we cease to fill the place in their lives that we once held. Or the explanation may simply be that, without fault or inequality on either side, our differing tastes and temperaments and habits of thought have led us into separate paths. In any case it is a mark of self-will in us to be exacting with people or petulant with their faults or despairing of all good in them. Let us make up our minds to accept each other as we are, content that each should live his own life, always ready with mutual good offices, thankful for what inspiration we may receive from each other, and sincerely striving to be such ourselves that our influence may be helpful to our neighbors. This also is the will of God.

Looking more generally about us, the progress of the world does not satisfy our sense of the fitness of things. It includes the frequent triumph of evil, and much of what is called its good seems to us a doubtful good. We see an older order that we have loved passing into a new order that we dislike or dread. Or an old order of which we are tired persists and endlessly postpones the coming of a better day for which we long. But here again we only vex ourselves to no purpose, we only destroy our own peace and add nothing to the peace and happiness of others, save as we consent to bide our time and bear such useful part as we may in the inevitable course of things, however counter it may run to our wishes. We do well to bear in mind, too, that sometimes what seems to us the reversal of humanity's onward and upward progress is largely but the friction of that progress. For the present it grates on our finer sensi-

bilities, but in the end it works out either the result we are so impatient for or a better result. Thus the destruction of slavery in our land came about by a series of events which sorely perplexed and disheartened many who were longing for this very consummation. Because it was not coming in their way, they thought it was not coming at all. But, though their will was not done, God's will was done; and, when the process was complete, they saw that their salvation had all along been nearer than they had dared to believe. To the eyes of his disciples the crucifixion of Jesus was a dire event, lit by no ray of hope. But amid its darkest gloom, and in spite of all its shame and agony, he saw the will of God in it, and bowed his head in submission. And so the cause which to mortal vision seemed lost was taken up into the world's life, and the cross has become forevermore the symbol of a victorious faith.

Now all this does not imply a mere passive acquiescence in an inert or evil order of things. It is not a weak surrender of our spiritual nature to material forces and conditions. It is based on the recognition of a higher Power working through all that seems so adverse and at last bringing to pass the triumph of all good. It allies us with this higher Power, and in the mean time we achieve within ourselves some measure at least of the good which we cannot compel in the world outside of ourselves. In our acceptance of whatever is inevitable in our lot we will to do the will of God, and that calls out the highest and most intense activity of our whole nature. The outward submission means an inward struggle and victory that requires all the strength of a vigorous and resourceful manhood and womanhood. To endure

greatly the ills and the formidable things of life when we can no longer subdue them, — there is an exercise of strength and courage in that which often puts to shame the more ostentatious energy of a bustling activity. Just to hold the soul calmly in its true orbit implies a degree of power far beyond that of militant natures who fling themselves with violence into the turmoil of the world. It is greater to rule one's own spirit than it is to take a city, and in the overcoming of one's self is the victory that overcomes the world.

There are times when we are called not simply to endure hard conditions of life, but to the entire relinquishment of what has seemed to us all that made our life worth the living, so that we have held it to constitute our very life itself. We see our friends, those nearest to us it may be, removed by death; and it is like losing the greater part of ourselves. We see the plans of a lifetime come to nothing. We see the wreck of our ambitions. And it is not easy to submit ourselves to the will of God when it assumes such shapes. To look on while our dearest hope is disappointed and bow serenely to the event means a self-mastery that is not lightly attained. Is it possible to do this? and, if possible, what profit is there in it? But we are not the first to undergo such discipline. What is the case of those who have done so with submission? Have they found in the will of God, under these its most mysterious and forbidding aspects, aught that could compensate them for their sorrow and loss? A hard question, and yet there is but one answer to it that can satisfy us. The will of God cannot be otherwise than good. To trust it cannot be amiss. To live according to His will can only bring such gains as no event, however dire, can take away.

Many a time the cup of life has been dashed from the lips ready to drink it just as it was brimming with life's golden nectar; and in its place has been pressed the bitter cup of defeat or deprivation or death, or the mingling of them all. When to our human understanding there is every reason why a certain richly endowed life should sweep on to its completion, how shall we explain, on any theory that God is in His world, the sudden arrest that so often befalls? What does it mean when the voice we all must obey says, Stop? We may not know fully, but we do well to believe that life is not the poorer thereby. Else what signify the fountains of feeling and memory and imagination that are opened in us by such a happening? Some of us have seen French's group of "Death and the Young Sculptor." In the midst of the joy of his creative faculty, hammer and chisel in hand and the marble before him, the Angel of Death touches the sculptor's arm, and the design will never be finished. No, not that design. But with this very arrest of death for his theme the brother sculptor has produced a greater work of art than any life not comprehending that experience can afford. And thus art is notably enriched. Thus, too, wherever this symbolic representation of a great spiritual truth becomes known, a distinct addition is made to the meaning and beauty of all religion and all life. The artist is indeed called away from that little block of marble: he will face it no more. But be sure that elsewhere God has other work for him to do, that under a fairer light than any which shines on earth, and in a more enduring marble, he shall embody an ideal more divine than that he so grieved to part from here. Theodore Parker, cut off in his prime, said at the last:

"There are two Theodore Parkers now. One is dying here in Italy, the other I have planted in America. He will live there, and finish my work." And how is it with Phillips Brooks? Being dead, does he not yet speak to us?

> "Following, struggling, falling, dying,
> Is he sure to bless?
> Saints, apostles, prophets,
> Martyrs, answer, Yes!"

And so at last the robe of humility is transformed into the garment of praise. The life of renunciation turns out to be the more abundant life. To them who obey it the will of God becomes the peace of God which passeth all understanding.

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AMERICAN UNITARIAN ASSOCIATION
25 Beacon Street, Boston

UNITARIANISM IN AMERICA

A History of its Origin and Development

By George Willis Cooke, Member of the American Historical Association, American Association for the Advancement of Science, American Academy of Political and Social Science, etc.

Size, 5 3-4 x 8 1-2 inches; pages, 463; 21 full-page illustrations; price, $2.00 *net;* postage, 14 cents additional.

THE purpose of this work is to furnish a complete, impartial, and candid record of the origin and growth of American Unitarianism, with accounts of its organization, its progress, and its relation to all present-day movements for social and religious betterment, all of which is presented in "the true spirit of the historical method, without reference to local interests and without sectional preferences." Controversial treatment is thus happily avoided. The author has made long and thorough examination of original manuscripts and journals, as well as many magazines, newspapers, and printed reports of various kinds. The result has been to bring together into a single octavo volume of 475 pages much valuable material, heretofore to be found only in widely scattered sources, and a large array of facts not obtainable elsewhere. The volume is fully indexed, making all references to any one topic readily accessible. The book thus becomes a valuable reference work as well as a thoroughly readable and instructive history. It has been written with special reference to its helpfulness in explaining the Unitarian attitude and temper.

The opening chapters begin with the English Sources of American Unitarianism, followed by chapters upon the Liberal Side of Puritanism, the Growth of Democracy in the Churches, and the Silent Advance of Liberalism. Then follows the organization of the American Unitarian Association, and its various activities as the national executive organization of our churches are fully set forth. Chapters are given to the accounts of the Sunday School Society, the Boston Fraternity of Churches, the Women's National Alliance, the Post-office Mission, and other enterprises which mark the spirit of Unitarian endeavor. The relation of Unitarianism to philanthropy, reforms, education, and literature, receive special chapters of unusual interest. The closing chapter treats of the future of Unitarianism.

In addition to the text itself are twenty-one full-page half-tone portrait illustrations of prominent Unitarian leaders, including a frontispiece of Channing. These grouped pictures add not a little to the general interest of the volume.

AMERICAN UNITARIAN ASSOCIATION
25 Beacon Street, Boston

THE American Unitarian Association is the working missionary organization of the Unitarian churches of America. It seeks to promote sympathy and united action among Liberal Christians, and to spread the principles which are believed by Unitarians to be essential to civil and religious liberty and progress and to the attainments of the spiritual life. To this end it supports missionaries, establishes and maintains churches, holds conventions, aids in building meeting-houses, publishes, sells, and gives away books, sermons, tracts, hymn-books, and devotional works.

Tracts descriptive of Unitarian principles, doctrines, and methods, are sent free to any who desire to know what Liberal Christianity stands for and works for. A list of these free tracts will be sent on application. A full descriptive catalogue of the publications of the Association, including doctrinal, devotional, and practical works, will be sent to all who apply. All religious books by Unitarian authors are kept on sale, and will be sent on receipt of price. A list of such books, with prices, will be furnished upon request.

The Association is supported by the voluntary contributions of churches and individuals. Annual subscriptions of any amount are solicited. Address communications and contributions to the Secretary at his office, 25 Beacon Street, Boston, Mass. The following is the simple

FORM OF BEQUEST.

I give and bequeath to the American Unitarian Association, a corporation established by law in the State of Massachusetts, the sum of.....dollars.

BLESSED BE DRUDGERY!

BY

REV. WILLIAM C. GANNETT

AMERICAN UNITARIAN ASSOCIATION
BOSTON

Our Faith.

The Fatherhood of God.
The Brotherhood of Man.
The Leadership of Jesus.
Salvation by Character.
The Progress of Mankind,
onward and upward forever.

Typical Covenant of a Unitarian Church.

In the love of the truth, and the spirit of Jesus Christ, we unite for the worship of God and the service of man.

Our Declaration

(*As expressed in the By-Laws of the American Unitarian Association*).

"The object of the American Unitarian Association shall be to diffuse the knowledge and promote the interests of pure Christianity; and all Unitarian Christians shall be invited to unite and co-operate with it for that purpose."

(*As expressed by the National Conference of Unitarian and Other Christian Churches, at Saratoga, N. Y., in 1894.*)

"These Churches accept the religion of Jesus, holding, in accordance with his teaching, that practical religion is summed up in love to God and love to man.

"The Conference recognizes the fact that its constituency is Congregational in tradition and polity. Therefore, it declares that nothing in this Constitution is to be construed as an authoritative test; and we cordially invite to our working fellowship any who, while differing from us in belief, are in general sympathy with our spirit and our practical aims."

BLESSED BE DRUDGERY!

I.

Of every two men probably one man thinks he is a drudge, and every second woman at times is *sure* she is. Either we are not doing the thing we would like to do in life; or, in what we do and like, we find so much to dislike that the rut tires even when the road runs on the whole a pleasant way. So I am going to speak of the *Culture that comes through this very Drudgery.*

"Culture through my drudgery!" some one now is thinking. "This tread-mill that has worn me out, this grind I hate, this plod that, as long ago as I remember it, seemed tiresome,— to this have I owed 'culture'? Keeping house, or keeping accounts, tending babies, teaching primary school, weighing sugar and salt at the counter, those blue overalls in the machine-shop,— have these anything to do with 'culture'? Culture takes leisure, elegance, wide margins of time, a pocket-book: drudgery means limitations, coarseness, crowded hours, chronic worry, old clothes, black hands, head-aches. Culture implies college: life allows a daily paper, a monthly magazine, the circulating library, and two gift-books at Christmas. Our real and our ideal are not twins: never were! I want the books,— but the clothes-basket wants me. The two children are good,— and so would be two hours a day without the children. I crave an outdoor life,— and walk down town of morn-

ings to perch on a high stool till supper-time. I love Nature, and figures are my fate. My taste is books, and I farm it. My taste is art, and I correct exercises. My taste is science, and I measure tape. I am young and like stir: the business jogs on like a stage-coach. Or I am *not* young, I am getting gray over my ears, and like to sit down and be still; but the drive of the business keeps both tired arms stretched out full length. I hate this overbidding and this underselling, this spry, unceasing competition, and would willingly give up a quarter of my profits to have two hours of my daylight to myself — at least I would if, working as I do, I did not barely get the children bread and clothes. I did not choose my calling, but was dropped into it — by my innocent conceit; or by duty to the family; or by a parent's foolish pride; or by our hasty marriage; or a mere accident wedged me into it. Would I could have my life over again! Then, whatever I *should* be, at least I would *not* be what I am to-day!"

Have I spoken truly for any one here? I know I have. Goes not the grumble thus within the silent breast of many a person, whose pluck never lets it escape to words like these, save now and then of a tired evening to husband or to wife?

There is often truth and justice in the grumble. Truth and justice, both. Still, when the question rises through the grumble, Can it be that this drudgery, not to be escaped, gives "culture"? the true answer is, — Yes, and culture of the prime elements of life; of the very fundamentals of all fine manhood and fine womanhood.

Our *prime* elements are due to our drudgery, — I mean that literally; the *fundamentals*, that underlie all

fineness, and without which no other culture worth the winning is even possible. These, for instance,— and what names are more familiar? Power of attention, power of industry, promptitude in beginning work, method and accuracy and despatch in doing work; perseverance, courage before difficulties, cheer under straining burdens, self-control and self-denial and temperance. These are the prime qualtities; these the fundamentals. We have heard these names before! When we were small, Mother had a way of harping on them, and Father joined in occasionally, and the minister used to refer to them in church. And this was what our first employer meant: only his way of putting the matter was, "Look sharp, my boy!" "Be on time, John!" "Stick to it!" Yes, that is just what they all meant; these *are* the very qualities which the mothers tried to tuck into us when they tucked us into bed, the very qualities which the ministers pack into their platitudes, and which the nations pack into their proverbs. And that goes to *show* that they are the fundamentals. Reading, writing, and arithmetic are very handy, but these fundamentals of a man are handier to have; worth more; worth more than Latin and Greek and French and German and music and art-history and painting and wax flowers and travels in Europe, added together. All these are the decorations of a man or woman: even reading and writing are but conveniences: those other things are the *Indispensables*. They make one's sit-fast strength, and one's active momentum, whatsoever and wheresoever the lot in life be,— be it wealth or poverty, city or country, library or workshop. Those qualities make the solid substance of one's self.

And the question I would ask myself and you is,

How do we get them? How do they become ours? High school and college can give much, but these are never on their programmes. All the book-processes that we go to the schools for, and commonly call "our education," give no more than *opportunity* to win the Indispensables of education. How, then, do we get them? We get them somewhat as the fields and valleys get their grace. Whence is it that the lines of river and meadow and hill and lake and shore conspire to-day to make the landscape beautiful? Only by long chisellings and steady pressures. Only by ages of glacier-crush and grind, by scour of floods, by centuries of storm and sun. These rounded the hills, and scooped the valley-curves, and mellowed the soil for meadow-grace. There was little grace in the operation, had we been there to watch. It was "drudgery" all over the land. Mother Nature was down on her knees doing her early scrubbing-work? That was yesterday: to-day, result of scrubbing-work, we have the laughing landscape.

Now what is true of the earth is true of each man and woman on the earth. Father and mother and the ancestors before them have done much to bequeath those elemental qualities to us; but that which scrubs them into us, the clinch which makes them actually ours, and keeps them ours, and adds to them as the years go by,—that depends on our own plod, our plod in the rut, our drill of habit; in one word, depends upon our "drudgery." It is because we have to go, and *go*, morning after morning, through rain, through shine, through tooth-ache, head-ache, heart-ache to the appointed spot and do the appointed work; because, and only because, we have to stick to that work through the eight or the ten hours, long

after rest would be so sweet; because the school-boy's lesson must be learnt at nine o'clock and learnt without a slip; because the accounts on the ledger must square to a cent; because the goods must tally exactly with the invoice; because good temper must be kept with children, customers, neighbors, not seven times, but seventy times seven times; because the besetting sin must be watched to-day, to-morrow, and the next day: in short,— without much matter *what* our work be, whether this or that, it is because, and only because, of the rut, plod, grind, humdrum *in* the work, that we at last get those self-foundations laid of which I spoke,— attention, promptness, accuracy, firmness, patience, self-denial, and the rest. When I think over that list and seriously ask myself three questions, I have to answer each with *No:* (1) Are there any qualities in the list which I can afford to spare, to go without, as mere show-qualities? Not one. (2) Can I get them, get these self-foundations laid, save by the weight, year in, year out, of the steady pressures? No, there is no other way. (3) Is there a single one in the list which I cannot get in some degree by undergoing the steady drills and pressures? No, not one. Then beyond all books, beyond all class-work at the school, beyond all special opportunities of what I call my "education," it is this drill and pressure of my daily task, that is my great schoolmaster. *My daily task,* whatever it be, *that is what mainly educates me.* All other culture is mere luxury compared with what that gives. That gives the Indispensables. Yet, fool that I am, this pressure of my daily task is the very thing that I so growl at as my "Drudgery"!

We can add right here this fact, and practically it is a very important fact to girls and boys as

ambitious as they ought to be,—the higher our ideals, the *more* we need those foundation habits strong. The street-cleaner can better afford to drink and laze than he who would make good shoes; and to make good shoes takes less force of character and brain than to make cures in the sick-room, or laws in the legislature, or children in the nursery. The man who makes the head of a pin or the split of a pen all day long, and the man who must put fresh thought into his work at every stroke,—which of the two more needs the self-control, the method, the accuracy, the power of attention and concentration? Do you sigh for books and leisure and wealth? It takes more "concentration" to use books—head-tools—well than to use hand-tools. It takes more "self-control" to use leisure well than work days. Compare the Sundays and Mondays of your city: which day, all things considered, stands for the city's higher life,—the day on which so many men are lolling, and so many women dressing, or the day on which all toil? It takes more knowledge, more integrity, more justice, to handle riches well than to bear the healthy pinch of the just-enough.

Do you think that the great and famous escape drudgery? The native power and temperament, the capital at birth, the outfit, counts for much, but it convicts us common minds of huge mistake to hear the uniform testimony of the more successful geniuses about their genius. "Genius is patience," said who? Sir Isaac Newton. "The Prime Minister's secret is patience," said who? Mr. Pitt, the great Prime Minister of England. Who, think you, wrote, "My imagination would never have served me as it has, but for the habit of commonplace, humble,

patient, daily, toiling, drudging attention"? It was Charles Dickens. Who said, "The secret of a Wall-street million is common honesty"? Vanderbilt; and he added as the recipe for a million (I know somebody would like to hear it), "Never use what is not your own, never buy what you cannot pay for, never sell what you haven't got." How simple great men's rules are! How easy it is to be a great man! Order, diligence, patience, honesty,—just what you and I must use to put our dollar in the savings-bank, to do our school-boy sum, to keep the farm thrifty, and the house clean, and the babies neat. Order, diligence, patience, honesty! There is wide difference between men, but truly it lies less in some special gift or opportunity vouchsafed to one and withheld from another,—less in that than in the differing degree in which these common elements of human power are owned and used. Not how much talent have I, but how much will to use the talent that I have, is the main question. Not how much do I know, but how much do I do with what I know? To do their great work the great ones need more of the very same habits which the little ones need to do their smaller work. Goethe, Spenser, Agassiz, Jesus, share, not achievements, but conditions of achievement, with you and me. And those conditions for them as for us are largely the plod, the drill, the long disciplines of toil. And, if we ask such men their secret, they will uniformly tell us so.

Now since we lay the firm substrata of ourselves in this way, and only in this way; and since the higher we aim, the more, and not the less, we need these firm substrata,—since this is so, I think we ought to make up our minds and our mouths to sing a hal-

lelujah unto Drudgery: *Blessed be Drudgery,*— the one thing that we cannot spare!

II.

But there's something else to be said. Among the people here, or that half of us who are drudges, and to whom I am talking, there are some who have given up their dreams of what, when younger, they used to talk or think about as their "ideals"; and have grown at last resigned, if not content, to do the actual work before them. Yes, here it is,— before us, and behind us, and on all sides of us; we cannot change it; we have accepted it. Still, we have not given up one dream,— the dream of *success* in this work to which we are so clamped. If we cannot win the well-beloved one, then success with the ill-beloved,— this at least is left to hope for. Success and time may make *it* well-beloved, too,— who knows? Well, the secret of this Success still lies in the same old word, "Drudgery." For drudgery is the doing of one thing, one thing, one thing, long after it ceases to be amusing; and it is this "one thing I do" that gathers me together from my chaos, that concentrates me from possibilities to powers. That whole long string of habits — attention, method, patience, self-control, and the others — can be rolled up and balled, as it were, in the word "concentration." "One thing I do," said Paul; and, apart from what his one thing was, in that phrase he gave the watchword of salvation. We will halt a moment over it, for —

> "I give you the end of a golden string.
> Only wind it into a ball,—
> It will lead you in at Heaven's gate
> Built in Jerusalem's wall."

Men may be divided into two classes, those who have a "one thing," and those who have no "one thing" to do; those with aim, and those without aim, in their lives: and practically it turns out that almost all of the success, and therefore the greater part of the happiness, go to the first class. The aim in life is what the backbone is in the body; without it we are invertebrate, belong to some lower order of being not yet man. No wonder that the great question, therefore, with a young man is, What am I to be? and that the future looks rather gloomy until the life-path opens. The lot of many a girl, especially of many a girl with a rich father, is a tragedy of aimlessness. Social standards, and her lack of true ideals and of real education, have condemned her to be frittered: from twelve years old she is a cripple to be pitied, and about thirty she comes to know it. With the brothers the blame is more their own. The boys we used to play our school-games with have found their places; they are winning homes and influence and money, and, what is more, their natures are growing strong and shapely, and their days filling with the happy sense of accomplishment,—while *we* do not yet know what we are, and have no meaning on the earth. Lose us, and the earth has lost nothing; no niche is empty, no force has ceased to play; for we have got no aim, and therefore we are still—nobody. *Get your meaning*, first of all; and ask the question till it is answered past question, What am I? What do I stand for? What name do I bear in the register of forces? In our national cemeteries there are rows on rows of unknown bodies of our soldiers. They have done a work, and to their lives have put a meaning, by which they are remembered in homes where the

mother and the townsmen say, "He died in the war, although it's not known where." But the men and women whose lives are aimless, reverse their fate. Our *bodies* are known, and answer in this world to such or such a name,— but as to our inner *selves*, with real and awful meaning these walking bodies might be labelled, "An unknown man sleeps here!"

Now, since it is concentration that prevents this tragedy of failure, and since this concentration always involves Drudgery, long, hard, abundant, we have to own again, I think, that that is even more than what I called it first,— our chief schoolmaster; besides that, Drudgery is the gray Angel of Success. The main secret of any success we may hope to rejoice in, is in that Angel's keeping. Look at the leaders in the professions, the "solid" men in business, the master-workmen who begin as poor boys and end by building a town to house their factory-hands; they are drudges of the single aim. The man of science, and to-day more than ever, if he would add to the world's knowledge or even get a reputation, must be, in some one branch at least, a plodding specialist. The great inventors, Palissy at his pots, Goodyear at his rubber, Elias Howe at his sewing-machine, tell the secret,— "One thing I do." The reformer's secret is the same. A one-eyed, grim-jawed folk the reformers are apt to be: one-eyed, grim-jawed, seeing but the one thing, never letting go; they have to be, to start a torpid nation. Such men as doers of the single thing drudge their way to their success. Even so must we, would we win ours. The foot-loose man is *not* the enviable man. If wise, a man will be his own necessity, and bind himself to a task, if early wealth or other lowering circumstances fail to bind him.

Dale Owen in his autobiography told the story of a foot-loose man, ruined by his happy circumstances. It was his father's friend, one born to princely fortune, educated with the best, married happily, with children growing up around him. All that health and wealth and taste and leisure could give were his. Robert Owen, an incessant worker, once went to spend a rare rest-moment with him at his country-seat, one of the great English parks. To the tired man, who had earned the peace, the quiet days seemed perfect, and at last he said to his host, "I have been thinking that if I ever met a man who had nothing to desire, you must be he; are you not completely happy?" The answer came: "Happy! Ah, Mr. Owen, I committed one fatal error in my youth, and dearly have I paid for it! I started in life without an object, almost without an ambition. I said to myself, 'I have all that I see others contending for; why should I struggle?' I knew not the curse that lights on those who have never to struggle for anything. I ought to have created for myself some definite pursuit, no matter what, so that there would be something to labor for and to overcome. Then I might have been happy." Said Owen to him, "Come and spend a month with me at Braxfield. You have a larger share in the mills than any of us partners. Come and see for yourself what has been done for the work-people there and for their children; and give me your aid." "It is too late," was the reply. "The power is gone. Habits are become chains. You can work and do good; but for *me*, in all the profitless years gone by I seek vainly for something to remember with pride, or even to dwell on with satisfaction. I have thrown away a life." And he had only one life in this world to lose.

Again then, I say, Let us sing a hallelujah and make a fresh beatitude to Drudgery: *Blessed be Drudgery!* It is the one thing that we cannot spare.

III.

This is a hard gospel, is it not? But now there is a pleasanter word to briefly say. To lay the firm foundations in ourselves, or even to win success in life, we *must* be drudges,—that I take for granted now. But we *can* be *artists*, also, in our daily task. And at that word things brighten.

"Artists," I say, not artisans. "The difference?" This: the artist is he who strives to perfect his work,—the artisan strives to get through it. The artist would fain finish, too; but with him it is to "finish the work God has given me to do!" It is not how great a thing we do, but how well we do the thing we have to, that puts us in the noble brotherhood of artists. My Real is not my Ideal,—is that my complaint? One thing at least is in my power: if I cannot realize my Ideal, I can at least *idealize my Real.* How? By trying to be perfect in it. If I am but a raindrop in a shower, I will be at least a perfect drop; if but a leaf in a whole June, I will be at least a perfect leaf. This poor "one thing I do,"—instead of repining at its lowness or its hardness, I will make it glorious by my supreme loyalty to its demand.

An artist himself shall speak. It was Michael Angelo who said, "Nothing makes the soul so pure, so religious, as the endeavor to create something perfect: for God is perfection, and whoever strives for it strives for something that is God-like. True painting is only an image of God's perfection,—a

shadow of the pencil with which he paints, a melody, a striving after harmony." The great masters in music, the great masters in all that we call artistry, would echo Michael Angelo in this; he speaks the artist-essence out. But what holds good upon his grand scale, and with those whose names are known, holds equally good of all pursuits and all lives. That true painting is an image of God's perfection must be true, if he says so; but no more true of painting than of shoemaking, of Michael Angelo than of John Pounds the cobbler. I asked a cobbler once how long it took to become a good shoemaker; he answered promptly, "Six years, sir, and then you must travel." That cobbler had the artist-soul. I told a friend the story and he asked his cobbler the same question, How long does it take to become a good shoemaker? "All your life, sir." That was still better a Michael Angelo of shoes! Mr. Maydole, the hammer-maker of central New York, was an artist: "Yes," said he to Mr. Parton, "I have made hammers here for twenty-eight years." "Well, then, you ought to be able to make a pretty good hammer by this time." "No, sir," was the answer, "I *never* made a pretty good hammer. I make the best hammer made in the United States." Daniel Morell, once president of the Cambria rail-works, in Pittsburg, which employed seven thousand men, was an artist, and trained artists. "What is the secret of such a development of business as this?" asked the visitor. "We have no secret," was the answer, "we always try to beat our last batch of rails. That's all the secret we have, and we don't care who knows it." The Paris book-binder was an artist, who, when the rare volume of Corneille,

discovered in a book-stall, was brought to him, and he was asked how long it would take him to bind it, answered, "Oh, sir, you must give me a year at least; *this* needs all my care." Our Ben Franklin showed the artist, when he began his own epitaph, "Benjamin Franklin, printer." And Professor Agassiz, when he told the interviewer that he had "no time to make money," and began his will, "I, Louis Agassiz, teacher."

In one of Murillo's pictures in the Louvre, he shows us the interior of a convent kitchen; but doing the work, there are — not mortals in old dresses — but beautiful white-winged angels. One serenely puts the kettle on the fire to boil, and one is lifting up a pail of water with heavenly grace, and one is at the kitchen dresser reaching up for plates; and I believe there is a little cherub running about and getting in the way, trying to help. What the old monkish legend that it represented is, I do not know. But as the painter puts it to you on his canvas, all are so busy, and working with such a will, and so refining the work as they do it, that somehow you forget that pans are pans and pots pots, and only think of the angels, and how very natural and beautiful kitchen-work is,— just what the angels would do, of course.

It is the angel-aim and standard in an act that consecrates it. He who aims for perfections in a trifle is trying to do that trifle holily. The *trier* wears the halo; and therefore the halo grows as quickly round the brows of peasant as of king. This aspiration for perfect doing,— is it not religion practicalized? If we use the name of God at all, is this not God's presence becoming actor in us? No need, then, of being

"great" to share that aspiration and that presence. The smallest roadside pool has its water from heaven and its gleam from the sun, and can hold the stars in its bosom, as well as the great ocean. Even so the humblest man or woman can live splendidly! That is the royal truth that we need to believe, you and I who have no "mission," and no great sphere to move in. The universe is not quite complete without *my* work well done. Have you ever read George Eliot's poem called "Stradivarius"? Stradivarius was the famous old violin maker, whose violins, nearly two centuries old, are almost worth their weight in gold to-day. Says Stradivarius in the poem: —

> "If my hand slacked,
> I should rob God,— since he is fullest good,—
> Leaving a blank instead of violins.
> *He* could not make Antonio Stradivari's violins
> Without Antonio."

That is just as true of us as of our greatest brothers. What, stand with slackened hands and fallen hearts before the littleness of your service! Too little, is it, to be perfect in it? Would you, then, if you were Master, risk a greater treasure in the hands of such a man? Oh, there is no man, no woman, so small that they cannot make their life great by high endeavor; no sick crippled child on its bed that cannot fill a niche of service *that* way, in the world. This is the whole of the Gospel to him who is ready for it, that the kingdom of heaven is near *him*, just where he is; is just as near us as our work is; for the gate of heaven for each soul lies in the endeavor to do that work perfectly.

But to bend this talk back to the word with which we started: will this striving for perfection in the

little thing give "culture"? Have you ever watched such striving in operation? Have you never met humble men and women who read little, who knew little, yet who had a certain fascination as of fineness lurking about them? Know them, and you will be apt to find them persons who have put so much thought and honesty and conscientious trying into their common work,—it may be sweeping rooms, or planing boards, or painting walls,—have put their ideals so long, so constantly, so lovingly, into that common work of theirs, that finally these qualities have come to permeate not their work only, but their being, till they are fine-fibred through and through; even if, on the outside, rough bark still may cling. Without being schooled, they instinctively detect a sham,—one test of culture. Without haunting the drawing-rooms, they have manners of quaint grace and graciousness,—another test of culture. Without the singing-lessons their tones are apt to be gentle,—another test of culture. Without knowing anything about Art, so called, they know and love the best in *one* thing, are artists in their own little specialty of work,—and that has tended to make them artists in their life. They make good company these men and women,—why? Because, not having been able to realize their Ideals, they have idealized their Real, and thus in the depths of their nature have won true "culture."

You know all Beatitudes are based on something hard to do or to be. "Blessed are the meek": is it easy to be meek? "Blessed are the pure in heart": is that so very easy? "Blessed are they who mourn." "Blessed are they who hunger and thirst,"—who *starve*—"after righteousness." So this new beati-

tude by its hardness only falls into line with all the rest. A third time and heartily I say it,— "Blessed be Drudgery!" For thrice it blesses us: it gives us the fundamental qualities of manhood and womanhood; it gives us success in the thing we have to do; and it makes us, if we choose, artists,— artists within, whatever our outward work may be. *Blessed be Drudgery*,— the secret of all Culture!

THE American Unitarian Association is the working missionary organization of the Unitarian churches of America. It seeks to promote sympathy and united action among Liberal Christians, and to spread the principles which are believed by Unitarians to be essential to civil and religious liberty and progress and to the attainments of the spiritual life. To this end it supports missionaries, establishes and maintains churches, holds conventions, aids in building meeting-houses, publishes, sells, and gives away books, sermons, tracts, hymn-books, and devotional works.

Tracts descriptive of Unitarian principles, doctrines, and methods, are sent free to any who desire to know what Liberal Christianity stands for and works for. A list of these free tracts will be sent on application. A full descriptive catalogue of the publications of the Association, including doctrinal, devotional, and practical works, will be sent to all who apply. All religious books by Unitarian authors are kept on sale, and will be sent on receipt of price. A list of such books, with prices, will be furnished upon request.

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OPEN INSPIRATION

VERSUS

A CLOSED CANON AND INFALLIBLE BIBLE

BY

REV. CHARLES WILLIAM PEARSON

AMERICAN UNITARIAN ASSOCIATION
BOSTON

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OPEN INSPIRATION VERSUS A CLOSED CANON AND INFALLIBLE BIBLE.

Jesus told the scribes and Pharisees that they made "the word of God of none effect through their tradition." Very many of our religious teachers are today doing the same thing. Modern preaching lacks truth and power because so many churches cling to an utterly untenable tradition that the Bible is an infallible book. This dogma is their besetting sin. It is the golden calf of their idolatrous worship. It is the palpable lie that gives the ring of insincerity to all their moral exhortations. If theologians wish to regain their lost intellectual leadership, or even to possess an influence on the thoughtful part of the community, co-ordinate with that of poets, philosophers, and men of science, they must throw aside the dogma of an infallible Bible as completely and frankly as Protestants have thrown aside the dogma of an infallible pope.

The Bible is the most precious of all books. Its teaching that man is a child of God and an heir of heaven ennobles human life, and is the great basis of virtue, happiness, and high achievement. All other charters and constitutions are small in value beside the documents and titles that the prophets and apostles and Jesus Christ have left us. The Bible is a noble collection of law, history, biography, precept,

and poetry. Of all writers the Psalmists and Prophets, evangelists and apostles, best deserve Wordsworth's eulogy : —

> "Blessings be with them, and eternal praise,
> Who gave us nobler loves and nobler cares,
> The poets, who on earth have made us heirs
> Of truth and pure delight by heavenly lays."

But the great spiritual treasure of the Bible is in an earthen vessel, and the water of life has been colored by the medium which has preserved it. The credulous and the ignorant disciple, the allegorist and the poet, the priest and the scribe, in their efforts to expound and popularize religious truth, have all more or less clogged and corrupted the spiritual message of the prophets, and our teachers must frankly recognize this fact. Let us look at a few examples of tares among the Bible wheat.

There is a story in the Book of Daniel that Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, for refusing to bow down to the image of a Babylonian king, were cast into a burning, fiery furnace, the flames of which slew those that threw them into it, and yet the fire had no power upon the three opponents of idolatry. "Not a hair of their heads was singed, neither were their coats changed, nor the smell of fire had passed on them." (Dan iii. 27.) He must be a very bold or a very ignorant man who will assert that he believes that this account is literally true. It is certainly a thousand times more probable that it is a legend or allegory.

We read in the Book of Kings that when Elijah fled from Ahab and dwelt in the wilderness, "the ravens brought him bread and flesh in the morning and bread and flesh in the evening." (1 Kings xvii. 6.)

We read in that quaint mediæval book, *The Voyages and Travels of Sir John Mandeville* that the monks of the church of Saint Catharine at Mount Sinai have plenty of olive oil for their lamps, "by God's miracle; for the ravens, crows, and choughs, and other fowls of that country, assemble there once every year, and fly thither as in pilgrimage; and each brings a branch of bays or olive in its beak, instead of offering, and leaves it there, of which the monks make great plenty of oil." The story of Elijah's ravens and Mandeville's story of the ravens of Saint Catharine's monastery are akin. They are mere poetic fancies, one as untrue and incredible as the other.

We read that Elijah smote the waters with his mantle, and "they divided hither and thither," so that he and his companions "went over on dry ground." (2 Kings ii. 8.) Elijah is said to have miraculously multiplied meal and oil, and even to have raised the dead. (1 Kings xvii. 8–23.)

With his successor Elisha, the myth-making fancy has been even more active. He, too, was said to have had power over the elements. He divided the waters with his mantle, and went through Jordan dryshod (2 Kings ii. 14); he made iron to swim (2 Kings vi. 6); he multiplied a widow's single pot of oil until it filled many vessels (2 Kings iv. 1–7). He, too, raised the dead. (2 Kings iv. 18–37.) Some of these stories are crude and childish, some are pathetic and sublime; but they are all alike legendary and not historic.

It is impossible to draw any dividing line between these alleged miracles in the Old Testament and similar accounts in the Gospels and Acts of the Apostles. When a gate opens "of its own accord" to let Peter

through (Acts xii. 10), we think of the story of Elisha and the ax he made to swim. When Jesus is represented as multiplying loaves and fishes to feed a great multitude, we think of the widow's barrel of meal multiplied by Elijah and of the cruse of oil increased by Elisha. When Jesus is represented as walking on the lake of Gennesaret, we think of Moses dividing the Red Sea and of Elijah and Elisha cleaving the waters of the Jordan. The story of the raising of the son of the widow of Nain by Jesus recalls the story of the raising of the son of the Shunammite woman by Elisha. The legendary element is as obvious and as indisputable in the New Testament as in the Old.

It is admitted by all commentators that the differences in substance and style in the books of the Bible correspond to the differences in the temperaments and opinions of the writers of the respective books. John's Gospel differs from Mark's because the intellectual and spiritual endowments of those who wrote them were different. The writings of Isaiah differ from those of Jeremiah or Ezekiel, because the men themselves differed; and so on through the whole list of books and authors. Carrying the reasoning a step further, it means that every sentence in every book in the whole Bible is the thought of some man or woman inspired by God, the ultimate source of all power and wisdom.

The only question is, How did God communicate the contents of the book to man? Nobody maintains that he handed a parchment scroll down from heaven. The Ten Commandments were indeed said to have been written by the finger of God on tables of stone. If this language is not figurative, it is legendary and incredible, and no similar claim is made for any other

part of the Bible. How, then, were the Psalms, the Gospels, and the Epistles written? Did God write any one of them on any material substance so that the physical eye of the human author saw the writing and transcribed it? Did he speak the words aloud so that they came to the outward ear like a telephone message? Surely, no reverent and intelligent man will accept either of these views. No book, no chapter, no verse, no word in the Bible was ever so communicated. God is a spirit, and speaks to man as a spirit and through the spirit. All spiritual truth comes to man through his brain and conscience; and one man receives more and another less, because of the differences in the hearts and minds and wills of men. Some men seek to know and love and obey the will of God; and naturally that will is more clearly and abundantly made known to them than it is to those who do not seek to know it, do not love it, and do not obey it. "Ask, and ye shall receive: seek, and ye shall find," says Jesus. "If any man will do God's will, he shall know of the doctrine whether it be of God." (John vii. 17.)

This is a view of inspiration which agrees with all the facts. It gives a very high degree of authority to many parts of the Bible and a much lower one to other parts, and permits a changed interpretation or the rejection of such parts of the book as from time to time are superseded by God's later revelations to his chosen prophets and to all his people. The Bible nowhere intimates (not even in Rev. xxii. 18, 19), that the canon of Scripture is closed, but in hundreds of passages we are taught that God's revelation of himself to man is universal and continuous. The true light is said to enlighten every man that cometh

into the world. (John i. 9.) Jesus said that the Holy Spirit would lead his followers into all truth. The burden of every apostle's exhortation is, "Quench not the spirit: resist not the Holy Ghost."

Every message from heaven comes to us colored and shaped and limited by some man's personality, and must be discarded or altered or supplemented according to the new knowledge and the new needs of men. *Vox populi, vox dei.* Humanity is the great ecumenical council. The race is greater than its greatest representatives. The religious consciousness of men, perennially quickened by the divine spirit, is forever testing every spiritual dogma and ideal, and is continually elevating the intellectual and moral standard of the race.

Those who perceive that this is true have no difficulty with any passage in the Bible. They may cordially recognize that what is now a scientific error was once a scientific advance; that what is now relatively low morality, even that what would now be an atrocious crime, was once done with a sincere belief that it was in accord with God's will.

Such a view relieves the churches of the present day of any responsibility for scientific error and for the odium attaching to the passages enjoining a war of extermination, the slaughter of whole nations, men, women, and children (Deut. xx. 16, 17); the killing of prophets and reformers (Deut. xiii.); slavery (Lev. xxv. 44–46); the polygamy of Jacob, David, Solomon, and other patriarchs and prophets; the refusal of divorce for drunkenness, cruelty, or desertion (Mat. v. 32); and the passages on the nature and status of women which are so fiercely resented by some of the sex, and are a pain and perplexity to thousands of

the Church's most loving and helpful members. (1 Cor. xi. 3, 9.)

The great spiritual teachings of the Bible rest upon absolute and eternal truth, but its history and science are always imperfect and often erroneous. Only the most ignorant still believe in witchcraft and demoniacal possession. Not the "stars in their courses" only, not merely astronomy, but geology and biology have shown that the story of creation in Genesis is poetic and not scientific. The Church cannot afford to uphold primitive conceptions which are opposed by every school book on the subjects in question, or barbarous ethics which are condemned by every moralist and legislator.

It will be asked in dismay by conservative people, What is left to the Church if it accepts these views? I answer, an infinitely truer, richer, and more spiritual religion. Faith, hope, and charity are left. The moral law is left. The Bible itself is left, and all its spiritual teachings are freed from the dead body of tradition and quickened into new life.

The great task of the Church is to continue and expand the work of Jesus, to get rid of the traditions which "make the word of God of none effect," and to develop faith in direct and immediate communion with the Father. In other words, we must discard all error as soon as we discover it to be error, and accept all truth as soon as we become convinced that it is truth. Spiritual revelation in the past legendary age was bound up with legend: spiritual revelation in the present scientific age must be based upon science. "The truth shall make you free," says Jesus. The love of truth is the great liberating and unifying force in all lines of inquiry and conduct. Truth is

real and objective, and is eventually discovered by all honest and competent seekers after it. But those who wilfully refuse or neglect the truth have no basis of agreement whatever, but are at the mercy of their individual prejudices and caprices, and are lost in the endless mazes of error.

Religious teachers cannot safely oppose or ignore the exact sciences. Ignorant men, no matter how pure and honest they may be, cannot to-day direct the world's affairs. Nor can wise men, leaders in science, in commerce, and in finance, economists and philanthropists, work effectively through merely secular agencies. They must lay hold upon the mighty spiritual aspirations through which man joins his feebleness to the omnipotence of his divine Creator. The existing churches by laying aside their legends and superstitions, and accepting reverently all truth as it is revealed, must become fit agencies for the best minds to utilize, or must yield to newer and more progressive organizations. The evasion and suppression of truth, if persisted in, becomes mere priestcraft and imposture, and leads to the decay and death of any church that permits it.

Miracles of the class before spoken of, once a help, are now a hindrance. Those churches which continue to teach that such legends, errors, or allegories are literal truth, taint all the rest of their message. People are saying, and they will say more and more, I cannot believe these stories ; and I will have nothing to do with any church that teaches their literal truth or calls the book that contains them infallible. It is the cowardly refusal of the churches to admit patent facts and to advance with the advance of knowledge that has brought about their present deplorable con-

dition and the low moral state of the nation that depends so largely upon them for spiritual guidance and strength.

But it will be said that multitudes of simple and ignorant people implicitly believe the Bible legends. Perhaps many of the ignorant do, but certainly many of the ignorant do not, and surely the opinions of the ignorant are not to prevent the declaration of truth by the better informed. Truth must not be surrendered to bigotry. Paul gave us a rule and an example for such cases when he declared that to obstructive traditionalists he did not "give place by subjection, no, not for an hour." (Gal. ii. 5.)

But it will be further objected that this is the infidel's view of miracles. What then? Shall the prophets not denounce idolatry because the wits scoff at those who bow down to graven images? Wise men will accept the truth from any source. If Christians were more ready to learn from infidels when the infidels are right, there would soon be much less of infidelity in the world. Infidels would accept our truth if we would accept theirs; but, when they see us mistaken and unreasonable in some very plain and simple matters, they are less likely to trust our wisdom and sincerity in more important concerns.

It is said by some that the errors in the Bible are so interwoven with the spiritual truths of the gospel that the existence of errors cannot be admitted without destroying faith in Christ's teaching and character. It is a shameful allegation. It is the saddest and deepest infidelity, for it is equivalent to saying that Christianity itself rests upon ignorance and error. There is a pseudo-Christianity that does so rest; but the Christianity of Christ is a struggle for spiritual

and intellectual perfection, and every advance in knowledge, in truth, and in righteousness, tends to strengthen, establish, and extend the influence of Jesus Christ and of the "Kingdom of God" upon earth. "Be ye perfect" is the law of Christ. His greatest apostle so understood it, and exhorts in the words, "Add to your faith, virtue; and to virtue, knowledge."

We require our heathen converts to renounce their errors and false traditions, and to accept new customs. Shall we be less heroic than they? That we Protestants may live up to our professions and our past we must accept new truth and new duty at all costs and at all hazards. Great, undoubtedly, will be the labor involved in making so stupendous a change as the advances in scholarship and the new social conditions demand, yet it will not be greater than the work of the reformers in the sixteenth century. So strong and so splendid was the mediæval church that it seemed impossible to change it, yet the change was made; and the great Protestant bodies and the great nations which Protestantism has created are the glorious justification of the faith and courage of those whose keen spiritual vision saw things yet hidden from the worldly wise and selfishly prudent.

It is by perfect obedience to the conceived will of God, by seeking truth and righteousness with the whole heart and mind and soul and strength, that the Church has won all of her victories. Obedience to the voice of God in the soul gave power to the prophets of Israel. Obedience to the Holy Spirit gave their "tongues of fire" to the apostolic church. Faith in the soul of man, and in the lawfulness and trustworthiness of private judgment as against the

claims of authority and tradition, enabled the Lutheran reformers to overthrow the papacy. Personal faith in God's guidance led the Pilgrim Fathers across the sea, and established a free church in a free state. Faith in the "inner light" and obedience to the direction of the Holy Spirit enabled the Friends to give their powerful testimony against religious persecution, against slavery, and against war. Faith in the doctrine of the witness of the spirit, personal consciousness of pardon and salvation, gave joy and power to the early Methodists. Quench not the spirit, resist not the Holy Ghost, is the burden of all Scripture and all history. Obedience to truth and duty as revealed by God to every man's conscience is the eternal principle of spiritual life : surrender of personal conviction through fear of man or love of the world is the eternal principle of death.

It is the spirit of truth, the purpose to discover and apply the whole truth on every subject, that has given science in these later years its amazing progress, — a spirit that makes every scientific man a coworker with the omnipotent God and every great scientific association a true ecumenical council, declaring unto men the will of the Most High.

From Abraham, who left his country and his kindred ; from Moses, who refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter ; from Paul, who counted not himself to have apprehended, but who pressed forward, — from every saint and hero, ancient and modern, we learn that the greatness of all the great comes from using all the light and exerting all the power at their command.

My plea is that the official leaders of the churches, those who have the necessary scholarship and the ad-

ministrative responsibilities, should unite to change the prevailing policy of silence, inactivity, and obstruction in regard to the results of modern scientific and Biblical scholarship into one of sympathy and encouragement for absolute freedom of inquiry and exposition. Thorough research and full frank exposition of results would amazingly quicken the intellectual and spiritual life of the Church. Cannot the policy of inertia and suppression be changed? Cannot all the sciences be made tributary to religion? Cannot Christianity be based upon progressive truth instead of upon mouldering tradition?

In what respect, I ask, is it more moral in our day for the churches to teach miracles instead of law than it would be for colleges to teach astrology instead of astronomy, or alchemy instead of chemistry? There is the same obligation on every teacher to teach truth and not error, to increase knowledge and not to obstruct; and in the case of the clergyman there is the voluntary additional obligation of a vow to follow the example of the most daring and self-sacrificing of all spiritual leaders who has expressly commanded all who want to be his disciples to be led by the Holy Spirit into new truth, and to let their light shine, who has expressly condemned the man who buried his talent, and has told his followers not to fear the opposition or persecution of men, but to fear God only.

It ought to be evident to the authorities in the churches that while Christ is ever growing in power, and is, indeed, drawing all men unto him, the Churches are more and more looked upon as incomplete and unsatisfactory agencies for carrying on his work. If the leading Protestant churches are not to

sink into a position like that of the Catholic Church, one in which reason is wholly subject to authority and is grossly outraged and scorned; if the Protestant churches are not going henceforth to make their appeal only to the ignorant, the weak, and the credulous; if, instead of being a body of investigators and expositors, a brotherhood of seers and prophets, preachers are not to degenerate into a mere priesthood and church services into sacramentarianism and ritual, it is certainly high time for the leaders in the churches to denounce known errors, and to formulate a programme of intellectual and spiritual advance.

It does not now require the exceptional courage and foresight of a Hume or a Strauss to recognize the mythical character of the Biblical miracles. We live in the day of Darwin and Huxley, of the Encyclopedia Biblica, and of the science of criticism; and for the churches to ignore the conclusions of the whole scientific world and of their own best scholars is at once fatuous and culpable.

To conclude. We hear much about efforts to purify politics, to control trusts and prevent the concentration of wealth in the hands of the few. But corruption and greed cannot be cured by legislation. They are diseases of the soul, and must be cured by agencies that appeal directly to the soul. The true word of God, if faithfully preached, will reach the hearts of men now as it did when spoken by the mouth of John the Baptist, of Jesus, of Paul, of Knox, and of Wesley. But mere perfunctory professional appeals, appeals which are clogged by irrational dogmas and by superstitious rites, are easily and contemptuously thrust aside by clear-headed, energetic men of affairs. If the church of to-day is to

control the business men of to-day, it must meet them fairly upon the plane of their intelligence. It must be as accurate, as energetic, as straightforward as they. It must preach living truth to men who deal with living values and forces. It must avail itself of the life-giving energy of the divine spirit as that spirit is now working among men.

The Protestant fathers must be judged by their light: we shall be judged by ours. Emerging from mediæval ignorance and needing a weapon with which to defend themselves against the usurped authority of an alleged infallible pope, the theologians of the Reformation might once in good faith preach an "infallible Bible," and "the times of this ignorance God winked at"; but surely now he commands his prophets and apostles to rise to the spiritual plane of Christ's teaching, and to follow him in denouncing the myths and legends, the traditions and superstitions, the worldliness and sin, that make the living word of God of none effect. When this is done, there will be a basis for a revival of spiritual religion; but, as long as our creeds and preaching rest upon what is known to be a false assumption, all exhortations by the churches to religion are inconsistent and hypocritical, and all accessions of numbers to them add little to their strength.

FOURTH SERIES.] [No. 146.

A MAN'S RIGHT TO HAPPINESS

BY

REV. CHARLES EDWARDS PARK

AMERICAN UNITARIAN ASSOCIATION
BOSTON

Our Faith.

The Fatherhood of God.
The Brotherhood of Man
The Leadership of Jesus.
Salvation by Character.
The Progress of Mankind,
onward and upward forever.

Typical Covenant of a Unitarian Church.

In the love of the truth, and the spirit of Jesus Christ, we unite for the worship of God and the service of man.

Our Declaration

(*As expressed in the By-Laws of the American Unitarian Association*).

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(*As expressed by the National Conference of Unitarian and Other Christian Churches, at Saratoga, N. Y., in 1884.*)

"These Churches accept the religion of Jesus, holding, in accordance with his teaching, that practical religion is summed up in love to God and love to man.

"The Conference recognizes the fact that its constituency is Congregational in tradition and polity. Therefore, it declares that nothing in this Constitution is to be construed as an authoritative test, and we cordially invite to our working fellowship any who, while differing from us in belief, are in general sympathy with our spirit and our practical aims."

A MAN'S RIGHT TO HAPPINESS.

"Behold, I come quickly: and my reward is with me, to render to each man according as his work is." — Rev. xxii: 12.

When a young person contemplates undertaking some great responsibility, which shall open the door of an entirely new phase of life, almost the first question that comes to mind is the question, "Shall I be happy if I do this?" Never did a young maiden plight her troth to her lover without first anxiously asking herself, "Shall I be happy if I marry him?" Never did a young man determine upon the field of activity he should enter for his life-work, without asking himself first, "Shall I be happy if I decide to become an engineer or a lawyer? Here is one of the critical points in my life. I must now determine what I shall do; in what especial branch of industry I shall exercise my fresh energies. The first thing to decide is, which one will yield me the greatest and the most permanent share of personal happiness." And his decision will depend largely upon the verdict of his judgment upon this single question.

The question is common enough. We all recognize it at once, for it would be strange indeed if we had not each of us asked ourselves that question many times during life. But the question betrays the existence of two ideas in people's minds. It implies two popular notions regarding happiness, which are, perhaps, more erroneous than would seem possible. When the young person on the brink of a great, new enterprise, asks that hysterical question, "Shall I be

happy if I do so and so?" it betrays, in the first place, the notion in his mind that his happiness is something that is governed by outward circumstances. It implies the belief that if he puts himself into a certain set of conditions, those conditions will render up to him a certain amount of happiness, which shall be greater or less according to the nature of the conditions. And it betrays, in the second place, the idea that he has a right to happiness; that he has the right of claiming from the world a certain amount of happiness as his just and lawful due. Now, inasmuch as every sound-minded person is interested in this matter of happiness, it may not be amiss to examine these two popular notions, with a view to exposing their inadequacy, and, if possible, substituting for them a truer conception of the nature and causes of happiness.

When the silversmith fastens his iron spoon to the cathode pole of his plating battery, and plunges it into the bath, he finds when he takes it out that countless minute particles of pure silver have impinged themselves upon the iron spoon in that electric bath, so that it is now silver-plated. It only needs to be polished to make it shine with all the lustre of the pure metal. When the plumber takes a piece of iron pipe, and plunges it into his galvanic tank, he finds upon withdrawing it that it is coated with a thick coating of zinc — galvanized, he calls it. Here is precisely the notion that people commonly have about happiness or sorrow. Happiness is some rare property that will be impinged upon a life, from without, if that life is plunged into the proper bath — the proper set of circumstances. And sorrow, also, is some doleful disfigurement that will coat over a life, if in a

moment of misjudgment or carelessness, that life is plunged into the biting solution of a galvanic bath. Happiness and sorrow are qualities which are given to a life by the action of the conditions into which that life is thrown. It therefore behooves every man and every woman to exercise the greatest care in choosing the conditions of their living, for out of those conditions they are fated to be either adorned with the bright lustre of happiness, or galvanized by the harsh and scaly coating of misery. This is the popular notion concerning happiness. The trouble with it is that there is but a very small grain of truth in it. Happiness — whatever we mean by that word — is not the fruit of environment. It is not something that can be given to a man by the fortunate collusion of external conditions. To be sure, the conditions may help greatly in hastening or retarding his happiness, but in the last resort man's happiness is a matter of his own temperament. It makes but little difference where or how a man is placed, if he is born with a happy temperament, nothing can prevent his enjoying happiness. If he is born with a morose temperament, nothing can make him happy.

The person who wrote the book of Ecclesiastes declares that he had spent his days in an earnest search for happiness, and had failed. He had tried every method, he had resorted to every expedient, and the result was always the same — Vanity of Vanities. Neither wisdom, nor amusement, nor wealth, neither song, nor dance, nor all the blandishments of luxury, could furnish him the end he sought. It is simply as we should expect it to be with a man of his temperament. "I looked on all the works that my hands had wrought, and behold, all was vanity

and a striving after wind, and there was no profit under the sun." His case reminds us of a couplet from Pope's "Essay on Criticism": —

> "All seems infected that the infected spy,
> As all looks yellow to the jaundiced eye."

To re-enforce our hypothesis, we may turn our attention to the ragged vagabond, in an allegorical poem by the Hon. John Hay. The poem is called "The Tale of the Shirt." It happened that the king of that country lay ill of a perplexing malady, from which he could recover, so the royal physician assured him, only when he had slept one night in the shirt of a happy man. Couriers had forthwith been despatched to scour the country-side, find that happy man, and strip him of his shirt, — but the task had proved too baffling. Everywhere they had been answered by the sigh of unfulfilled desire, until in sheer weariness of failure they were plodding reluctantly back to the palace. But even as they wend dejectedly along the highway, they come suddenly upon a ragged vagabond, lying in the sun by the roadside, and singing and shouting in a very exuberance of gayety. To their question the merry rogue replies that of course he is happy — the world is so beautiful, the sun is so warm, the air is so sweet, the meadows are so bright; how could he be any other than happy? But when, with thankful hearts, the couriers ask him for his shirt to take to the king, he answers, with another paroxysm of mirth, that he has not a shirt to his back. And so the baffled couriers return to their royal master with this significant piece of information, that the only happy man in his whole kingdom was so wretchedly poor that he had no shirt. And the

king, after thinking a while, rises from his bed, and goes quietly about his royal tasks, a graver and a more thoughtful monarch. It is, of course, possible to make the objection that the ragged vagabond was merely a figment of the author's imagination. True enough, and yet he has thousands of prototypes in living, breathing men and women. And they all stand as witnesses to this great fact of human nature — the very fact to which both the author of Ecclesiastes and the vagabond of Mr. Hay's poem testify — that a man's happiness depends not upon his outward circumstances, but upon his innate temperament. If it were not so, then the author of Ecclesiastes, with his palaces, his gardens, and his choirs of sweet singers, should have been a happy man, while the homeless vagabond, who lay by the roadside in his rags and patches, must needs have been desperately wretched.

When the astronomer attempts to correct his chronometer by reading the crossing of a star through his transit, he finds it necessary to introduce into his computations a factor which he calls the "personal equation." As any psychologist will tell us, it takes a fraction of a second for the observer's nerve, brain, and muscle to do their part in recording the crossing of that star, and this fraction of a second, which is called the "reaction time," and which differs with each different observer, must be neutralized by the personal equation in order that the calculation may be as nearly exact as is humanly possible. As in astronomy, so in almost every branch or phase of daily life, there exists the personal equation. Different people are differently influenced by the same thing. Different people act differently under the same conditions. Different people look upon the same life, the

same labor, the same opportunities, in different ways — in ways so different as to sound every note in the scale of human emotions, from happiness to misery. It is not the outward circumstances nor the surrounding conditions that control the degree of a man's joy. That degree of joy is determined rather by the inherent personal equation which he applies to the facts and observations of life. His happiness is a matter of his own inborn temperament.

There is a note of hopelessness in all this. Apparently some men are doomed, then, from their birth, and through no fault of theirs, to a sour and a melancholy existence. If happiness is a product which personal effort will not yield, but which is fore-ordained in ways which we cannot affect, then life takes on at once a fatalistic coloring, which declares our human endeavor to be futile. If we are born happy, well and good — so much the more fortunate are we. But if we are born morose, and no amount of temporal success will make us other than morose, we may as well sit back and pray for a speedy release. If happiness is a matter of inborn temperament, then our much vaunted privilege known as the pursuit of happiness is an empty boast. The leopard cannot change his spots. We cannot change our natural temperaments, and the winning of happiness is a matter taken out of our hands. At once life looks stereotyped and dead. Once take away the productiveness of personal effort, of personal endeavor, and we are left grounded upon the shoals of futility. Our energies lose their spring. Our spirits are robbed of their buoyancy. We are enmeshed in the tough web of a fatality whose operations we cannot influence.

People are too readily attacked by this insidious

logic of fatalism. It seems so very plausible to say that a man's temperament is decided independently of his own wish or desire, and that therefore he must be content to remain fettered and bound by that native temperament. It seems so very plausible to say that what is, is — that what will be, will be — and that all attempts to change one's destiny, or to modify one's disposition, are as vain as it would be to try and change one hair black or white. It all sounds very plausible indeed, but it is not true. The doctrine of fatalism is not only insidious and vicious, it is also untrue. We *can* modify our dispositions. We *can* change our temperaments. The whole long history of human growth stands as a glorious testimony to the success of human self-development. Of course, environment plays a great part in the process. The conditions of climate and geography, of fauna and flora, of topography and temperature, have huge weight in determining the trend of a society's growth, and in fixing its ultimate condition. But apart from all these outward circumstances, the most potent factor of all in procuring a state of social well-being is the power of conscious self-culture that lives and works within that society. And as it is true of a society, so is it true in equal measure of an individual — the strongest agent in procuring individual well-being is neither birth, nor breeding, nor inherited temperament, nor outward condition, but the ever-active power of self-culture which we may consciously employ within our own hearts.

Here is a wonderful fact to which we men and women are too easily indifferent. Self-cultivation is no myth, no high-sounding and empty phrase. It is a real possibility for every one. Surely there is no

need to prove to us, with our American traditions. with our countless examples of strong, noble, self-cultured men and women, with our Washington and our Lincoln, — there is no need to prove to us the possibility of self-cultivation. It is in the very air we breathe. Our national history is redolent with that sturdy spirit.

But here also is one of the stealthy dangers that wait in attendance upon a people whose civilization is becoming more complex and advanced, — that the power of self-culture is gradually forgotten, more and more lost to sight amidst the clamoring throng of external influences that crowd in upon us. Time was, in our healthy, robust, pioneer days, when the only means of achieving our well-being was through self-cultivation. There were none of the advantages offered for that purpose which present themselves to-day. Did a man want wisdom, or amusement, or manual skill, or mental strength? He could look nowhere for these things but to himself. Only by consistent and painstaking labor, only by conscious self-culture, could he obtain these blessings. But now-adays, with our numberless schools and playhouses, with our myriads of books and pamphlets and period-icals, we are not thrown upon ourselves. We need but to submit ourselves to one or the other of these external influences, in order to acquire the culture we demand. Self-culture is gradually being replaced, in our advancing civilization, by the culture that comes from without. Whereas the pioneer with his axe, standing solitary in the virgin forest, had to look to himself for all his help and growth, nowadays a young person crowded into our modern life, looks not to himself but to some external influence — school, or

church, or book, or playhouse — for the agent that shall develop his character and modify his temperament. In other words, it is not so much the power from within, it is rather the influence from without, that nowadays has greatest play upon human beings. The whole tendency of a highly developed civilization is to make people dependent upon external forces and influences. If we want to educate a boy, we send him to a college. We say, "Let us put him under that external influence, with the hope that that influence will so work upon him from without as to induce a corresponding condition within, so that he shall come forth educated." If we want to cure an unfortunate man of a vicious habit, we send him to an institution. We force him to face an outside influence. We put him through a process, with the hope that he will emerge at the other end, cured of his vice. As in large matters, so also in the closer details of our daily living, the tendency of the age is to make us dependent upon the external forces and currents of our complex life. It is not so much the power from within, as it is the power from without, that fashions us and moulds us.

All this is good. It is one of the blessings of advanced life. The more opportunities we have the better. But the unmixed blessing is a rare commodity, and even this great blessing of our highly advanced civilization brings in its train minor consequences of a disastrous nature. And one of those minor consequences is the waning of the power of self-culture, which is caused by this constant habit of looking to the power from without for our help. The danger is, that as the external influences increase about us, the power from within will be gradually el-

bowed out of existence, so that we are left, at the last, completely at the mercy of the external influences, with nothing to offset them when they are harmful; with nothing to replace them when they are insufficient.

It is one of the evils of our age, that we do not conduct ourselves wisely towards the richer opportunities which a wealthier civilization throws in our way. Half the young people who attend our colleges fail to reap the greatest benefit from the four years they spend among those tremendous opportunities. They attend their lectures generally with the idea that by simply submitting themselves, limp and unresisting, to the external influence which that lecture brings to bear on them, they will emerge, as the iron spoon emerges from the electric bath, silver-plated with the fine gloss of culture. Nothing could be wider of the mark. They forget that the lecture is only an opportunity, only a favorable external condition, in which the power within themselves can work more freely and more effectively. They forget that no matter how fine these opportunities may be, nothing can take the place of their own honest effort, in the task of winning culture.

This danger prevails, not only in our colleges, but in all walks of life. We are all too prone to forget that the outside influence is not sufficient, is not complete, but that it must be met half-way by the power from within. And when a man, in our wonderfully high civilization, moving about among the glorious opportunities and facilities of our age, knows enough to see that these external influences are not positive agents, but only tremendous opportunities for the freer life of the power within himself; and when he is

wise enough to accept these opportunities as they should be accepted, meeting them half-way with his own spontaneous efforts, — it seems as though there were nothing under the sun which such a man could not do; no height of nobility, of self-culture, to which he could not attain. It makes the blood tingle in our veins to think what sublime realms of development and of achievement he may reach. He has linked together the external influences that surround him, and the power that dwells within him. He has harnessed together his opportunity and his personal effort, and his progress is irresistible.

Four hundred years ago, the staunch little caravel, "Santa Maria," set out from Spain to discover a new world. She was a good ship of her kind. With silken banners and glistening sails, she issued forth upon the bosom of that mighty Sea of Darkness. But before long an angry billow broke her rudder, and a head wind drove her out of her course, and a cross-current drifted her back, and a black tempest whelmed her in desperate stress, and a quiet calm left her idle upon the waters. She was at the mercy of her external influences. She had no power from within, either to neutralize an obstacle, or to supply a deficiency. It was only by the mercy of Providence and the hardihood of her captain that she accomplished her errand. To-day our six-day liner starts from New York or Southampton, with her journey timed to the hour. Is the tide against her? What of that! Is the tempest black? Are the billows angry? Does the reeking fog hem her round? What are tempest, or tide, or fog, or calm, to her! With her compass and her chart, with her ten thousand horse-power dynamos purring their mighty note

in her bosom, she plunges on her way. Do the waves beat against her prow? She has the power from within to dash them aside. Do the winds favor her course, and fill her welcoming sails? She shall add their strength to the power from within, and make the better speed. And when her time is up, behold, the headlands of her port are sighted, and her journey is accomplished. Not by miracle, not by chance, but by the irresistible might of the power from within, linked with the external influences, she runs her stated course, and enters her haven promptly and safely at the last.

It is so with the man who uses his own energies in conjunction with the chances that surround him. We speak of the impossibility of self-culture. There is no limit to the glorious self-culture of such a man. We speak of the difficulty of self-development, of acquiring truer characters, and sweeter dispositions, and nobler temperaments. There is no bound set to the achievements in these lines, that are opened to such a man. He has yoked the power within him, to the influences that surround him, and he runs his course of life in safety and in certainty; and he reaches his haven of success without fail. Is he beset by sorrows and ruin? The power within him shall, by its sturdy might, drive him onward through the sorrow and the ruin. Do obstacles and head winds conspire to thwart his course and destroy his happiness? The power within him shall hold him steadfast to the work before him, and shall bring him a happiness which circumstances cannot tarnish. Is his temperament such that life looks sad and gray, and laughter is vain? The power that dwells within him shall mould his temperament, and shall train him in self-

control and self-devotion; and the sombre melancholy must give way to a deep optimism, and to the stern joy of hard-won victory. To such a man, happiness will be the fruit, not of circumstance, but of self-culture and self-control. He himself shall possess the resource that lifts him above the thraldom of his environment. His happiness shall be of the durable, firm-rooted sort that springs, not out of external conditions, but out of the richer soil of self-discipline.

Now to go back once more to the beginning; there is one other popular misconception which is betrayed by that eager question, "Shall I be happy if I do so and so?" That conception is, that each one has a right to be happy. When that question is asked at the threshold of some enterprise, it is equivalent to a claim that a certain modicum of happiness is naturally due to every one, and that every one may lawfully draw upon the world for their share of happiness. We have already answered this claim. It is not altogether justly founded. No one has a natural and inalienable right to happiness, any more than the laborer has a right to his wage until he has earned it. But every man has the right to earn it. And the way to earn it is the way that we have seen, — the way of real living; the way of earnest effort; the way of true growth and true self-cultivation. When that way of effort and growth has been faithfully journeyed, then man has a right to happiness. And *then*, in obedience to one of God's surest and holiest principles, his generous rewards of heavenly happiness shall be poured into man's heart without measure and without stint. "Behold, I come quickly," says a heavenly voice, "and my reward is with me, to render to each one according as his work is." He who labors faith-

fully and truly in this wonderful life of growth and opportunity shall have his happiness, because the Almighty God of Inexorable Law and Infallible Justice dwells in Heaven. And so long as he reigns supreme, his divine rewards shall be shed upon his faithful sons and daughters.

FOURTH SERIES.] [No. 147.

THE GROWTH OF PRACTICAL RELIGION

BY

CARROLL D. WRIGHT

AMERICAN UNITARIAN ASSOCIATION
BOSTON

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THE GROWTH OF PRACTICAL RELIGION.

There is a great deal of discussion at the present time relative to the supposed decadence of the church, of church attendance, and of a real religious spirit. I cannot assent to the suggestion that there is any decadence or lessening of a true religious spirit, taking our community as a whole. There is, to be sure, a great change in the theological thought of the people. In the half-hour at my disposal I cannot discuss this, nor the mooted question as to church attendance, nor the religious spirit of the age in a pietistic sense ; but there seem to me to be so many evidences of the growth of a real religious sentiment, without regard to these other matters, that I take this occasion to present them, and I speak only of our own country.

The influence of the church must be acknowledged, whether people attend it in as large numbers as formerly or not. There is so much in our life, outside of mere church attendance, to develop the highest principles of right and wrong, that it is difficult to differentiate accurately. The evidences, therefore, which occur to my own mind as positive, emphatic, and conclusive, are such as are drawn from the attitude of the public conscience, public action, and a recognition of the great principles which underlie all religion, without reference to denominational creeds or theological distinctions.

The public conscience to-day is more acute, more

sensitive, than at any time in the history of mankind. We see this exemplified in so many directions that I feel it is almost a truism to repeat the statement; yet I know there are many who do not hesitate to assert that the public conscience of to-day is dull, lacks sensitiveness, and is not as alive to the great questions of right and wrong, as they affect the public, as at some former period.

We see the evidence of the truth of my assertion in the question of crime. I think it is the general belief that crime is largely on the increase, that civilization, instead of purifying the public mind, is leaving it demoralized and more open to criminal practices to an increasing number than formerly; and the statistics of crime support this contention. The difficulty is, however, that we do not stop to distinguish what is crime to-day and what was crime forty or fifty years ago; nor do we stop to consider the question as to the more perfect statistics of to-day brought into comparison with the very imperfect and crude statistics of half a century ago. The statistics comprehend not only the persistent crimes, but those crimes which have been established by legislative enactment, and increasingly so during the last few years. If we look beneath the figures, we shall find that the crimes that have remained persistently so under the criminal code during the last fifty years have not only not increased, but have relatively decreased. This is the true test.

One illustration is sufficient. In the criminal statistics of fifty years ago crimes relative to liquor-selling did not appear: to-day they constitute a large proportion of such statistics. In one of our Commonwealths where there has been varied experience under the liquor laws, it is found that, while during a period

of twenty years the total sentences for all crimes increased 70 per cent., and for crimes not including drunkenness and liquor offences only 20 per cent., the sentences for drunkenness and other liquor offences increased nearly 160 per cent. as against an increase of over 50 per cent. in the populatiou.

This is positive evidence of the increased sensitiveness of the public conscience. This new conscience is constantly elevating misdemeanors that were offences against individual conscience into offences against the public conscience, and making them punishable as crimes. So, if we simply read the statistics of crime, some of our most staid and worthy Commonwealths are on the road to ruin at a rapid pace ; but an analysis of the data proves the contrary. If the public conscience had not been stimulated by high religious conception of the rights of the community and of the development of the individual, this state of affairs would not have occurred.

Growing out of crime there comes penology. It takes but a very slight and superficial examination of the subject of the treatment of criminals to convince any one that this treatment to-day cannot be compared, with any justice whatever, with their treatment half a century ago. We still believe that the criminal must be restrained because he is a menace to society. He is not restrained because of the desire to punish him. The old doctrine of the fall of Adam has been eliminated from penological science, and we are dealing with the criminal as a man morally diseased. He is the subject of proper care while under restraint. We must not degrade him, we must not humiliate him : we must treat him so that, when

he is cured or partly cured, he can resume his place in society with some prospect of earning his own living and conducting himself as a well-behaved citizen. Penology reflects the very highest religious principles: it shows that the precepts of the Christian religion have found practical application in the treatment of the defective elements in society. I know of no better nor more emphatic illustration of the evidence of the growth of a practical religion than in the penology of our day.

The temperance question occupies the public mind in a manner it never did before. Great railroad corporations are everywhere understanding that their duty as guardians of the public safety demands temperate employees. So the man who is given to the use of intoxicating liquors cannot now secure employment on our great railroads. This is the surest temperance reform known at the present time, but it is the outgrowth of an agitation which springs from the highest and purest motives. It is the exemplification of the very elements of religion.

The economic aspects involved in the treatment of the temperance question are having an influence which is spreading everywhere, and which is comprehended in industrial establishments and by government. The simple idea that a man with a clear brain is a better employee than one with a muddled brain is carrying this question forward to success; and the sooner men learn that in order to secure employment at all they must approach their service with minds unclouded, the better for humanity. Religion teaches that the temple of God must not be defiled. Economic consideration now allies itself with religion, and insists that the welfare of the community demands that the temple of God shall remain undefiled.

The treatment of the labor question offers the strongest evidence of the growth of a religious spirit. The employer recognizes this in large degree, — not everywhere, not in every establishment, but in increasing numbers and in an increasing degree. The best men are willing to grant to other men what they claim for themselves; and this is one of the highest conceptions of religious action. The moment one man recognizes the rights of another, he is far on the way to the solution of the difficulties which perplex him.

The labor unions are, in a sense, new. Their principles, which may be right enough, do not always determine their actions; but their actions will sooner or later conform to their principles, which are based upon the recognition of the rights of all men. The introduction of the spirit of conciliation; the recognition of the right of agreement, so that the details relating to the conditions of employment can be fixed by a positive contract; the readiness to arbitrate when all other means have been exhausted; the recognition of the fact that the workingman is seeking something beyond his arbitrary living wage, — all these influences are the result of a living spirit in men, which must find its fullest development through religious precepts. We may call them the ethics of industry, but ethics without religion is always feeble in the power to effect results. There must be a conscience which is above and outside ethical considerations to lead men to right action. The labor question involves many difficulties; but the outlook is most hopeful because, as I have said, men are everywhere recognizing, in larger degree than ever before, the mutual rights which belong to it.

Arbitration, however, which can never be a solution, but only a means to an end, takes broader and grander lines than the mere adjustment of labor troubles as they occur between employer and employee. The growth of the religious spirit in the settlement and adjustment of international affairs is an evidence that the public conscience has received some stimulation from some source which leads it on to the reasonable consideration of questions involving international rights, duties, and obligations. This is a religious spirit : it is a spirit which comes from very old teaching.

You will remember that the prophet Isaiah, a citizen of Jerusalem and a man who was considered in his day of great importance by his neighbors, became alarmed at what he thought an impending national calamity. He undertook to point out to the citizens of Jerusalem their particular sins of omission and commission, the wrongs which had been done, and to prophesy to them the results of their actions ; and, when he had made a strong presentment of his case, he said to the leading men of Jerusalem, "Come now, and let us reason together." This was about seven hundred and fifty years before Christ. The great prophet knew that by reasoning together people could come to see more clearly than by any other method the real dangers which confronted them. This old sentiment remained dormant for centuries and centuries. It was the Pauline method of adjusting difficulties in the Church. It has now become the universal method of settling difficulties between employers and employees, and the spirit has gone up higher — into the work of nations themselves.

There is a new patriotism, — that patriotism which

is born of a religious spirit. It is devotion to a high principle. It is a patriotism which means personal sacrifice in social service. It is a higher type of patriotism than that exemplified on the battlefield. It is not limited to sect or to party. Denominations vie with each other in their devotion to public interests, and one of the most gratifying results of this broad and religious patriotism is what may be called the new American diplomacy. Our martyred President McKinley set the world an example when he established truthfulness as the essential element of diplomatic action ; and to-day truth is the spirit of diplomacy,— truth and the acceptance of high principles. The old diplomacy was systematic deception,— methods to avoid the truth, processes to conceal the real intent of a government. Now diplomacy must disclose the real intent, reveal the truth, and show the real attitude of contending nations.

This is one of the results of that sensitive conscience which demands publicity in all things relating to the public. It is through this spirit that we learn of the conditions, economic and moral, which pertain to all public action. The new conscience demands that, if there be anything to be known which in any way interests the public and by which it can guide its action and reach its conclusions, it shall be made public. Great corporations come under this power, the government itself comes under it, and the increasing demand for publicity in all affairs will do more toward solving some of the problems which vex us than any other one means.

We see this sensitiveness growing out of public action when any of our public officials take the wrong road. We have been very severe everywhere in the

condemnation of some of the transactions in the Post-office Department. At the close of the Spanish War the public became very much excited over the Neely case. These two incidents in public service, however, were slight affairs compared with the scandals of the whiskey ring and the star route cases of a generation ago; but there has been more said, more condemnation, more public interest in these recent affairs, than there was over the two greatest scandals ever connected with our government. Why is this? Simply because the public conscience demands integrity of service by all public officials. The increased sensitiveness of this conscience is back of the demand; and a conception of a religious principle, active and persistent, is what has made the sensitive public conscience of our day.

Religion has done away with the old forms of charity. We go into the slums now. If we are wise, we do not toss a beggar a dime or a quarter. We treat the whole subject in a different way, in a way which means the betterment of men themselves, and not gratification to the giver. We establish university settlements; we take men and women by the hand; we lead them to better ways. We scrutinize all charity work. In the cities this is organized. Investigation follows petition and demand, and the spirit of true religion is being exemplified in this direction alone.

During the past few months there have been some very edifying and broadening experiences which touch closely not only the spiritual nature of men, but their tolerance, their devotion to high personal character as represented by individuals, thus testifying to their devotion to the very highest prin-

ciples themselves. We have been celebrating the centenary of Emerson, and all denominations, whether our own or others, have joined in paying tribute to the memory of a pure soul. Emerson's influence has lifted men out of dogmatic ruts. It has left an impress on our public thought and on our public conscience. Perhaps his greatest legacy to the world was his emphasis of the necessity of perfected personal character. This has been the keynote, in large degree, of the encomiums that have been passed upon him. Whatever he was as a preacher, philosopher, or a poet, high personal character accompanied all his work, and we of to-day can draw the purest religious lessons not only from his life, but from the estimation in which he is held, without regard to theology or creed. And in the centenary of Channing it has been disclosed that his thought, his work, his message to the world, helped not only the people to whom he preached, but the whole public to a comprehension of a purer, a better, a higher Christ than existed before his day.

But perhaps the grandest experience has come through the death of Leo XIII. To read the estimates of his character as given in different Protestant churches, by ministers of different denominations, one would suppose that the old attitude toward Catholicism had passed away. Not an acrimonious word has been said, there being only praise for that sublime character and devout spirit which attended the late sovereign pontiff. When I was a boy, growing up through Know-Nothing days, I supposed that every Catholic church and chapel was stocked with guns and ammunition; but I have learned that the Catholic mind and the Catholic heart are precisely the

same as the Protestant mind and the Protestant heart, and the demonstrations at the time of the death of Leo emphasize the fact that we are more tolerant, more appreciative of real worth, more ready to recognize the highest personal character, than at any previous time in the history of the world. These universal estimates of Emerson and Channing on the one hand and of the pope on the other accentuate the ways of the Spirit, — ways that would not have found expression a quarter of a century ago. They symbolize the truest religious development of our time.

The Church has done all this ; and, when I say the Church, I mean all churches, — I mean religious teaching, the constant enunciation of the highest principles relating to human conduct, the endeavor of pulpits everywhere to impress upon the people the necessity (not through a system of rewards and punishments, but in order to secure the best results and the surest happiness) of dealing with all questions on a broad, tolerant basis, accepting the precepts of Christ and his teaching as the surest guides by which to mould not only individual, but public conduct.

The modern Church may fail to reach as many people, relatively, through its direct ministrations as of old ; but it is reaching them in another way. It is reaching them by the preaching of a sane doctrine, which means the upbuilding of the character of men and of the character of community. It is teaching us to recognize the rights and the wrongs that surround us. It is teaching us to be more active in our endeavor to suppress or to right wrong, and in all ways to bring about the establishment of a saner and better community spirit. This does not come from the crucified Christ, nor the dead Christ, nor

the Christ of the resurrection, but from the living, active Christ, that always was, is, and always shall be; and it is through this living Christ that we find the solution of all social, industrial, and political problems.

PIONEERS OF RELIGIOUS LIBERTY IN AMERICA

Being the Great and Thursday Lectures Delivered in Boston in Nineteen Hundred and Three

Size, 5 1-2 x 8 inches; pages, 396; price, $1.50 *net*; postage, 13 cents.

THE purpose and scope of this volume cannot be better shown than by giving the subjects and authors of the thirteen chapters which make up its contents. These are: I. "William Brewster and the Independents," by Edwin D. Mead; II. "Roger Williams and the Doctrine of Soul Liberty," by W. H. P. Faunce; III. "Thomas Hooker and the Principle of Congregational Independency," by Williston Walker; IV "William Penn and the Gospel of the Inner Light," by Benjamin B. Trueblood; V. "Thomas Jefferson and the Influence of Democracy on Religion," by Thomas R. Slicer; VI. "William Ellery Channing and the Growth of Spiritual Christianity," by William W. Fenn; VII. "Horace Bushnell and Progressive Orthodoxy," by Washington Gladden; VIII. "Hosea Ballou and the Larger Hope," by John Coleman Adams; IX. "Ralph Waldo Emerson and the Teaching of the Divine Immanence," by Francis G. Peabody; X. "Theodore Parker and the Naturalization of Religion," by James Eells; XI. "Phillips Brooks and the Unity of the Spirit," by Samuel A. Eliot.

The chapters making up this book were delivered as lectures in Boston in the spring of 1903, and attracted much attention. The purpose of the lectures and of the book is to set forth some of the great principles through which religious freedom in this country was achieved, and the connection with these principles of the great men who advocated them and gave them their power and enduring vitality. These thirteen champions of religious freedom were truly pioneers in the work in which they became so conspicuous, and no one can so fully realize the significance of our present freedom of thought in religious matters as by reading these accounts of the inception and growth of the religious principles which constitute so valued a part of our religious inheritance.

AMERICAN UNITARIAN ASSOCIATION
25 Beacon Street, Boston

UNITARIANISM IN AMERICA

A History of its Origin and Development

By George Willis Cooke, Member of the American Historical Association, American Association for the Advancement of Science, American Academy of Political and Social Science, etc.

Size, 5 3-4 x 8 1-2 inches; pages, 463; 21 full-page illustrations; price, $2.00 *net;* postage, 14 cents additional.

THE purpose of this work is to furnish a complete, impartial, and candid record of the origin and growth of American Unitarianism, with accounts of its organization, its progress, and its relation to all present-day movements for social and religious betterment, all of which is presented in "the true spirit of the historical method, without reference to local interests and without sectional preferences." Controversial treatment is thus happily avoided. The author has made long and thorough examination of original manuscripts and journals, as well as many magazines, newspapers, and printed reports of various kinds. The result has been to bring together into a single octavo volume of 475 pages much valuable material, heretofore to be found only in widely scattered sources, and a large array of facts not obtainable elsewhere. The volume is fully indexed, making all references to any one topic readily accessible. The book thus becomes a valuable reference work as well as a thoroughly readable and instructive history. It has been written with special reference to its helpfulness in explaining the Unitarian attitude and temper.

The opening chapters begin with the English Sources of American Unitarianism, followed by chapters upon the Liberal Side of Puritanism, the Growth of Democracy in the Churches, and the Silent Advance of Liberalism. Then follows the organization of the American Unitarian Association, and its various activities as the national executive organization of our churches are fully set forth. Chapters are given to the accounts of the Sunday School Society, the Boston Fraternity of Churches, the Women's National Alliance, the Post-office Mission, and other enterprises which mark the spirit of Unitarian endeavor. The relation of Unitarianism to philanthropy, reforms, education, and literature, receive special chapters of unusual interest. The closing chapter treats of the future of Unitarianism.

In addition to the text itself are twenty-one full-page half-tone portrait illustrations of prominent Unitarian leaders, including a frontispiece of Channing. These grouped pictures add not a little to the general interest of the volume.

AMERICAN UNITARIAN ASSOCIATION
25 Beacon Street, Boston

THE American Unitarian Association is the working missionary organization of the Unitarian churches of America. It seeks to promote sympathy and united action among Liberal Christians, and to spread the principles which are believed by Unitarians to be essential to civil and religious liberty and progress and to the attainments of the spiritual life. To this end it supports missionaries, establishes and maintains churches, holds conventions, aids in building meeting-houses, publishes, sells, and gives away books, sermons, tracts, hymn-books, and devotional works.

Tracts descriptive of Unitarian principles, doctrines, and methods, are sent free to any who desire to know what Liberal Christianity stands for and works for. A list of these free tracts will be sent on application. A full descriptive catalogue of the publications of the Association, including doctrinal, devotional, and practical works, will be sent to all who apply. All religious books by Unitarian authors are kept on sale, and will be sent on receipt of price. A list of such books, with prices, will be furnished upon request.

The Association is supported by the voluntary contributions of churches and individuals. Annual subscriptions of any amount are solicited. Address communications and contributions to the Secretary at his office, 25 Beacon Street, Boston, Mass. The following is the simple

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FOURTH SERIES.] [No. 148.

THE CHURCH AND THE YOUNG PEOPLE

BY

REV. MINOT J. SAVAGE, D.D.

AMERICAN UNITARIAN ASSOCIATION
BOSTON

Our Faith.

The Fatherhood of God.
The Brotherhood of Man.
The Leadership of Jesus.
Salvation by Character.
The Progress of Mankind,
onward and upward forever.

Typical Covenant of a Unitarian Church.

In the love of the truth, and the spirit of Jesus Christ, we unite for the worship of God and the service of man.

Our Declaration

(*As expressed in the By-Laws of the American Unitarian Association*).

"The object of the American Unitarian Association shall be to diffuse the knowledge and promote the interests of pure Christianity; and all Unitarian Christians shall be invited to unite and co-operate with it for that purpose."

(*As expressed by the National Conference of Unitarian and Other Christian Churches, at Saratoga, N. Y., in 1894.*)

"These Churches accept the religion of Jesus, holding, in accordance with his teaching, that practical religion is summed up in love to God and love to man.

"The Conference recognizes the fact that its constituency is Congregational in tradition and polity. Therefore, it declares that nothing in this Constitution is to be construed as an authoritative test; and we cordially invite to our working fellowship any who, while differing from us in belief, are in general sympathy with our spirit and our practical aims."

THE CHURCH AND THE YOUNG PEOPLE.

I BRING you this afternoon no new message: it is an old word which I have tried to speak over and over again, and which I shall try to speak a good many times, I hope, in the days that are to come. Possibly some friend who has heard me — one of my Unity people in Boston or some parishioner in New York — may be saying under his breath, "I have heard you say that before"; but that will not deter me from repeating it. I feel as the old minister did in regard to his sermon. He got up one Sunday morning, and said, "Brethren, I preached this sermon last Sunday; but, as I have not seen any signs of anybody's paying any attention to it, I am going to preach it again."

The theme assigned me is "The Relation of the Young People to the Church." Now, before I come to the young people, I wish to touch upon the ideal of the Church, — what the Church is and what it ought to be. I think I am not far astray when I say that many Unitarians have been born out of the old ideas concerning the Church, and are not yet completely born into the new. We are in a transition time. For example, I have dear friends in New York who have been going to church for years, but for the life of me I cannot get them to become members of the church; and the reasons are that they are not yet free from the old conceptions as to what church membership is supposed to mean. In the old days, to become a member of the church meant to become a child of God, to be converted, to be saved, to be delivered from the power

of the evil one, and assured a successful and blissful entry upon eternal life in the next world. We believe now that we are already children of God, and too many of us believe that, no matter what we are or what we do, the matter of eternal felicity is secured. We are not yet, I say, born into a clear conception of what the universe means, of what life means, of the relation in which we stand to God, the relation in which we ought to stand to him, and the importance of it as bearing upon the solution of the problems of this life and of that which is to come. For let me say right here, I do not at all believe that it does not make any difference concerning the future what kind of lives we lead here.

The old thought, that death somehow atoned, — the old idea I can remember holding myself that, if before the gate was finally shut I could only get through, I should be as well off as John or Paul, — this, lying somewhere in the background of the mind of thousands of people, is the most intolerable nonsense, if we stop to analyze it. You will not get to heaven in the next world unless you get heaven into yourselves here. You will get into no more heaven in any world than you first get into yourselves. So that we do need something to prepare us for the next life; and we need something to prepare us for this.

Let me now talk with you for a little while, if I may, about the Church, — as to what it stands for, and as to whether or not we are under any obligations to it. Then I will come to the matter of the young people and their relation to it.

In all ages, from the far-off beginning of the world until to-day, men have been blindly "feeling after God, if haply they might find him, who is not far from every one of us." In all ages of the world, under

every sky, men have been thinking about God, the power invisible, beyond us, on whose good will we depend; and they have been trying after their fashion to find out what that Being wanted them to do, and to do it. That is, in a certain way and to a certain extent they have been religious. For what is religion? What does it mean? Religion is man's effort to get into right relations with God. Right in there is the solution, and the only solution, for all the great problems that trouble and burden the world.

Suppose I can get into right relations with God,— myself personally,— what does it mean? So far as this physical being is concerned, it means perfect health. So far as the mind is concerned, it means the perception and acceptance of truth. So far as the heart or the affectional nature is concerned, it means the love of all that is good and beautiful and true. So far as the moral nature is concerned, it means perfectly right relations between me and every other being that can think and feel. So far as the spiritual nature is concerned, it means the loving, tender, comforting, helpful recognition of the fact that I am a child of God and that he is my Father. Perfect religion, then, so far as I personally am concerned, means a perfect being, physical, mental, affectional, moral, spiritual.

This is what religion means so far as the individual is concerned. Now the Church is nothing in the world but the organization, the social organization, of the religious life. Jesus founded no church; he instituted no sacraments; he wrote no creed. He planted the seed of the religious life in the thoughts and the hearts of the people about him, and left them naturally to develop and grow according to their nature. The

Church came into being of necessity, just as naturally as any other organization comes into existence. A man does what he can alone; but, if he undertakes any large enterprise, he finds that he needs some one to help him. So in a business way, for example, he unites with a neighbor or a friend, and you have what business men call a firm. He takes in three or four or half a dozen, and you still have a firm. He takes in a large number, perhaps several firms organized, and you have a trust. We find that, as civilization progresses, men, in order to accomplish any great thing, must organize; and, if that thing ought to be done, and can be done only through organization, then men ought to organize. Logical and inevitable is that result. If something ought to be done, and individuals, loosely associated or in their individual capacity, cannot accomplish it, and they can accomplish it by organizing, then they *ought* to organize. It becomes not a question of taste or feeling: it becomes a clear matter of duty. We have all sorts of organizations in the world,—religious, intellectual, political, musical, scientific,—all growing out of this one principle, springing from this one necessity, and defended by this one consideration, that men need to organize in order to accomplish larger results.

Now if men will only organize in the Church and live out the ideals of Jesus, then all the burdens and evils of the world may be lifted, outgrown, and left behind; and there is no other way of doing it. Let us consider for a moment. Art illustrates and beautifies life. Literature reflects life, paints it, entertains and edifies, instructs us. Business provides the means for carrying on the great processes of the world. Music expresses those emotions and feelings for which

we can find no adequate expression in language. All these things beautify, ornament, diversify, lift up, help life. But religion, the Church, is the only power on the face of the earth that creates life, that makes men and women what they ought to be: the only organization that has for its one definite, distinctive, only aim and end the making of men and women what they ought to be,—the only organization, I say, is the Church.

Law does not very much benefit the world. It is a breakwater, put up to protect us against the floods of anarchy and disorder. It does not change men much: it is simply a manifestation of what they are. This we find out when we try to enforce a law that is, as we say, ahead of public sentiment. People sometimes fancy that education is going to do the work of religion; but Herbert Spencer, agnostic, physical scientist though he is, has told us over and over again,—and he has lifted up his voice of warning once more in the last book that he has published, the fragments of his thought gathered and given to the world in his old age,—he has told us again that education does not necessarily make the world moral. Educate a man, and you may only turn him into a sharper and smarter scoundrel. The moralization of the world, he tells us, does not necessarily keep step with the intellectualization of the world. We cannot look to that, then, as our hope of deliverance from the evils that burden and afflict mankind.

I note now how clear and simple the truth is that the Church, if men would only organize in it and live out its life nobly, realize its ideals, would do away with all the things that burden and afflict mankind. It would eliminate vice from society, because vice

means doing those things which religion forbids. It would eliminate crime from society. Police courts, laws, jails, judges,— these have not accomplished it. It would eliminate the only poverty that is really a great problem to face, and that appalls us. The poverty in a city like New York is something overwhelming; but I will undertake to say that I will myself during the next three months raise money enough to meet and alleviate every case of honest poverty in the city if you will only help me sift the honest from the dishonest. For one reason or another there are certain good, honest, true people who are poor; but nine-tenths of the crushing, distressing poverty of our great cities roots itself in moral disorder. If men and women were only what they ought to be, if they lived a religious life, if they were in right relations to God and to each other, all this poverty would disappear.

Take again the question of the strikes, the labor disorders and difficulties of the world. You will remember what trouble we had a year ago in the coal regions, and what suffering there was all over the country. The labor questions are never going to be settled. None of these great problems are going to be settled, disposed of, and laid one side. This is an infinite universe, and men are finite and ignorant beings in the midst of it, growing; and in a growing universe, at every stage of progress and every step of advance, there are going to be new problems, new questions to solve. But there would be no trouble about settling them as we go, if only men and women were Christians, if they loved God, if they loved their fellow-men, if they wanted to do right. Let the labor leaders and the manufacturers or producers get

together simply desiring to find the right and do it, instead of each trying to overreach the other, and you could settle all these difficulties in three days.

Take it in political life. Every little while there goes up the great outcry in regard to political corruption. It is not a Democratic quality, it is not a Republican quality, and there is no way of organizing political machinery by which you will get rid of it. St. Louis, Philadelphia, New York, cities all over the country, some of them under Republican rule and some under Democratic, all illustrate the fact that men are corrupt, and that they desire to make money out of their political institutions. How are you going to avoid that? By turning out one party and putting in another? You are going to do it, friends, if it is ever done, along the lines of the way in which the Church is working, and by making individuals what they ought to be. There is no other way: there are no "six short and easy lessons" to political perfection.

Every little while the Socialists come to us with some new programme for reorganizing society. Is there any hope here? I think not. I have no objections to reorganizing, trying this method and trying that. Only here are a dozen men : they stand now in certain relations to each other. Suppose they change those relations in every conceivable way. When you get through, you have got the same dozen men that you had when you began, and you will get out the same results, so far as social or political organization is concerned. You will never get a perfect society until you get some perfect individuals to make it out of. So again here we must look to the Church for better social conditions, for better political conditions.

Take the abolition of war. How are we going to free ourselves from this great burden? It will never be done so long as nations hate each other and are ready to fly at each other's throats at the first provocation. Only when individuals have trained themselves into the principles of love and justice and brotherliness, are we going to leave the hideous experiences of war behind. There is no way of bettering this world, of relieving it of its burdens, of outgrowing its evils, except the way which religion points out,— no other method except that for which the Church stands.

The Church, then, is the one most important, noblest, grandest organization on the face of the earth. There are thousands of people who do not appreciate it, do not seem to understand it, who are half ashamed of having it known that they are interested in the life, the prosperity, the work of a church. The ideal Church is the one perfectly divine, perfectly human institution on the earth. Every man, then, every woman, ought to be a member of some church. I am not telling you all that you ought to be Unitarians. I think that, if you could only see things just as they are, you would be likely to be [laughter and applause]; but, if you are not ready to join this Church, cast in your lot with that church which represents best and with most nearly the truth your special ideas, your conception of God, your conception of man, your ideals of duty, your hopes of the time to come. Find that church, and work with it for the sake of humanity. If I had time this afternoon, I could show you that everything that you possess and everything you are is an outright gift from this poor, struggling, toiling, weeping, falling, rising, advancing, magnificent old

humanity of ours. You owe everything to humanity, — to God ministering through his children. And, if you wish to pay that debt, pay it by helping deliver the world from its burdens, its sorrows, its heartaches, its tears, its wrongs.

Now I am ready to talk about the young people. I was trained, as some of you know, in the orthodox church, — trained more as our friend Mr. Gannett told us the other night all our children ought to be trained. I cannot remember the time — I don't know how it was taught to me — when the pressure was not brought to bear on me to feel that the one great thing in the world was to become a Christian, — something that I felt I must become some time and in some way. Our Unitarian young people, as it seems to me, are not getting the kind of training as related to religion and the life of the Church which they ought to have for their own sakes and for the sake of the world, and which they must have if the Unitarian Church is to be the grand instrument for the development of the life of the world which we believe it ought to be and may become. If there is to be any church in the next twenty-five years, it is the young people represented by this Young People's Religious Union who are to create and constitute that church.

I wish to note now a few of the aspects of the life of our young people and our relations to them as touching this matter of the religious life.

I believe that our little children ought, from the moment they are able to feel and think and dimly hope and aspire, to receive the touch, the pressure, the help, the uplift of our religious ideals, our religious care. They ought to be taught to pray. Suppose they do pray as children, foolishly : we who are older do

the same. But just as you love to have your little child climb upon your knee and pour out its little sorrows and longings and hopes and fears and wants, no matter whether they are wise or not, so I believe the great Father-Mother around us and above us loves to have us pray. I believe that this father-love, this mother-love of ours, is only a little hint and suggestion of what is infinite in the heart of the infinite Father and Mother of us all. I believe our little children at home, then, ought from the very beginning to be taught that religion, right relation with God and right relation with our fellow-man, is the most important thing in all the world,— the sweetest, noblest, most sacred thing in all the world.

Then, when we come to our Sunday-school, what? I have been a good friend of the Sunday-school, so far as I was able. I have been a supporter and backer of the Unitarian Sunday School Society from the time I was born into your freedom. It seems to me, however, that there are certain very serious defects in our ordinary Sunday-schools. We have only voluntary management and voluntary teaching; and this ought to make the parents very indulgent and very kindly and very helpful. What does it make them? I know of cases where a mother will indignantly take her child out of the Sunday-school because she does not happen to like something that takes place there, forgetting entirely that she has absolutely no claim whatever on those that manage the Sunday-school for the work they are doing. Sunday-schools are imperfect. They are sometimes spoken of as the children's church; and I object to that. Is it not true, in many cases at least, that the children go to the Sunday-school, and, when they are graduated from that, that they graduate into

all outdoors? There is a defect in there somewhere. If the Sunday-school is worth anything, it ought to be the instrument by which the children are trained into an appreciation of the importance of the church life and the church work, so that a child once caught in the Sunday-school will inevitably land in the church.

I remember with love and tenderness and gratitude one Sunday-school superintendent of my boyhood and two Sunday-school teachers. I do not remember one single thing they taught me; but somehow the atmosphere of their presence, their love, their sympathy, their tenderness, impressed me so that I carry them as perfume about me from that day to this. I love, I revere their memories. But I was one of those unfortunate boys — as too many people regard it — who not only had to go to Sunday-school, but who went twice to a preaching service every Sunday and to prayer-meeting in the evening. It seemed to me a terrible burden then. Do you know that I am glad of it now? If I could have my way, rather than have a child go through the training of the best Sunday-school that ever was created and then graduate from it away from the church, I would never have that child go in sight of the Sunday-school: I would have him go to church with his father and mother from the beginning. Suppose he cannot understand the sermon, suppose he does get a little sleepy and tired, suppose he does not quite want to go, are you to let a child in regard to these things be a judge as to its own conduct and training? Think of it! Do you not force, if necessary, your child to go to the day-school? Do you not put him through whatever kind of training you regard as important for his after-life, and would you think it

kind because the child did not like to go to day-school, because you were forced to go when you were a boy, if you let him grow up ignorant, untrained, unfit for the great problems and the grave responsibilities of life? Yet think! The child had better grow up ignorant of mathematics, geography, reading, and spelling than to grow up without an outlook towards God and without any care for the conduct of his life as related to his fellow-men. If you believe anything yourselves, teach that to your children.

Here again I touch on a point that I have made to me constantly. Parents say, "I don't wish to bias the mind of my child: I will let it grow up free to choose, after it becomes developed, whatever it may think is right and best." Can you train your child without its being biassed? You do not teach it; but it is picking up something on every street corner, it is picking up theological ideas and superstitions from its nurse. In a thousand different ways it is being biassed in ways that you do not like and that do not represent your belief at all. You might as well take a piece of white putty and toss it out of the window into the street, and let it be passed from hand to hand, run over by wagon wheels, kicked about by the feet of the passers-by, and then tell it after it has been through this process to take whatever beautiful shape it chooses. Rather than send a child out in this sort of fashion, it would be a kindness if you launched him here by the wharf on a craft the structure of which he was ignorant of, concerning the management of which he knew nothing, without compass, without rudder, and let him drift with the winds and the storms. These are dangerous; but the winds and the storms and the tides and the currents that will

meet your child on the great ocean of life are unspeakably more dangerous. Give them, then, the benfit of whatever experience you have had, of whatever beliefs you have, and, if you have no beliefs, drop every other occupation until you find some.

There are things enough to know in regard to the great practical problems of life and the world, and there are ways of finding out what is true. It is only indifference or idiocy that is content to sit down and say, "I don't know what I believe." There are great vital truths which are open and free for everybody who chooses to seek and find. I do not mean that you should teach your child in the dogmatic fashion, as though you had sent your plummet to the bottom of the universe and settled all problems for good and all. Teach your child the truth as you see and understand it to-day. Tell him at the same time that he must keep his mind open and free,— for larger and grander truths are to be discovered, and he must be ready to listen to the last whisper that God gives us out of his sweet heavens,— and that he must be ready to follow the newest ray of light that shines upon his pathway. Give him the benefit of all you do know, and teach him, above all things, that the one great thing in life is for him to devote himself to getting into right relations with God and with his fellow-men, and uniting with his fellow-men for the sake of helping the world attain this same grand aim and end.

There is one other aspect of the education of our young people. Every little while we find some young man or woman from a Unitarian family who is attending some other church. It is better than not going anywhere; but is there any reason why our children

should not be trained to loyalty? Think of it! Our Church is the last and highest result of the evolution of religion under liberty that the world has ever seen. Man has been here on this planet three or four hundred thousand years; and it is only within the last hundred that we have attained to the liberty of grown-up men and women, free to think. It has cost tears and heartbreak and chains and fagot fires and thumb-screws,—torture of every kind. The great martyrs of the world are those who have consecrated themselves to winning for man that which we hold so cheap. And we do not teach our children the value of it enough, so but what at the slightest temptation they are ready to run off and fling themselves into the arms of the modern representatives of these that have tryannized over and held back the world. We ought to be ashamed of ourselves for our lack of loyalty to that freedom for which our fathers, the noblest men of all the world, have paid such a magnificent price!

What do we do? I have a case in mind now,—a boy, the child of Unitarian parents. He was to be sent to school. Did they send him to Hackley? No. Why? Not because it is not the most beautiful site for a school in the world, for it is; not because there are not magnificent buildings there, for there are,—although not enough for the purposes of the school; not because we have not one of the finest corps of teachers in the United States, for we have. Why was not the boy sent there? He was not sent there because the school was not very old, and football and athletics and a few other things of that sort were not sufficiently developed so as to give the boy an opportunity to distinguish himself in those directions yet. And for weighty reasons like these he was put under

the influence of men who will tell his father and mother frankly that they will do everything on earth they can to make an Episcopalian of him. And so we send our daughters to convents: we let our young people be educated in every direction, out of our own homes and out of our own churches; and we do not seem to care. We have a notion, some of us, that liberalism means that it does not make any particular difference. We seem to have an idea that "being broad" means that one thing is just as good as another, that there is no truth anywhere, that people are not expected to find it, and that their business is to stumble along through life as comfortably as possible and grab all the material prizes which they can. We shall never have a strong Unitarian Church, such as it ought to be, until we educate our children into the idea that they, as worthy sons of the past, are to consecrate themselves to the light and the truth and the highest and grandest religious organization that the world has yet developed. Such slight, such petty things turn us one side.

Let me at the close reiterate my statement that the Church is the one only organization on the face of the earth that has for its one distinct and definite purpose the making of men and women what they ought to be; and it is, therefore, the grandest organization on the face of the earth. And it follows, however poorly I may represent it, however poorly my fellow-ministers may represent it, that there is no profession on the face of the earth to compare for one instant in nobility and dignity and grandeur and sweetness with that of the ministry. If I had a hundred other lives to live, I would be a minister in every one of them; for it is the one work of the minister to help people think and

live, to help them find their way and walk in it. And there is nothing else that is worth much as compared with that.

Remember, then, what the Church stands for. Educate and train your children into an appreciation of these ideas; and, as this Young People's Religious Union is organized to teach, to foster, to develop, to further ideals of this sort, young people, join it; old people, give it your sympathy, your help, your cordial co-operation. And, whether in the Young People's Religious Union or in any other department of church thought or life, let us consecrate ourselves as children of the loving Father to doing all we can to help deliver this old world from its burden of sorrow and wrong. Let us live and work so that the low, sad music of humanity may sink and die to an echo, and then into silence down the path behind us. Let us not wait until the day of triumph comes. Remember those lines of Lowell's in that wonderful poem, "The Present Crisis": —

"Then to side with Truth is noble when we share her wretched crust,
Ere her cause bring fame and profit, and 'tis prosperous to be just."

Let us join that part of the Church which means the vanguard of the world's religious advance, whether it is popular or not, whether it leads us into the best society or not: let us join it because thus we can do the most to help on the day when the kingdom of God shall no longer be a beautiful dream, an ideal, something glimpsed, something prayed for, but when it shall be here.

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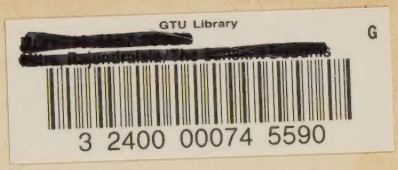

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